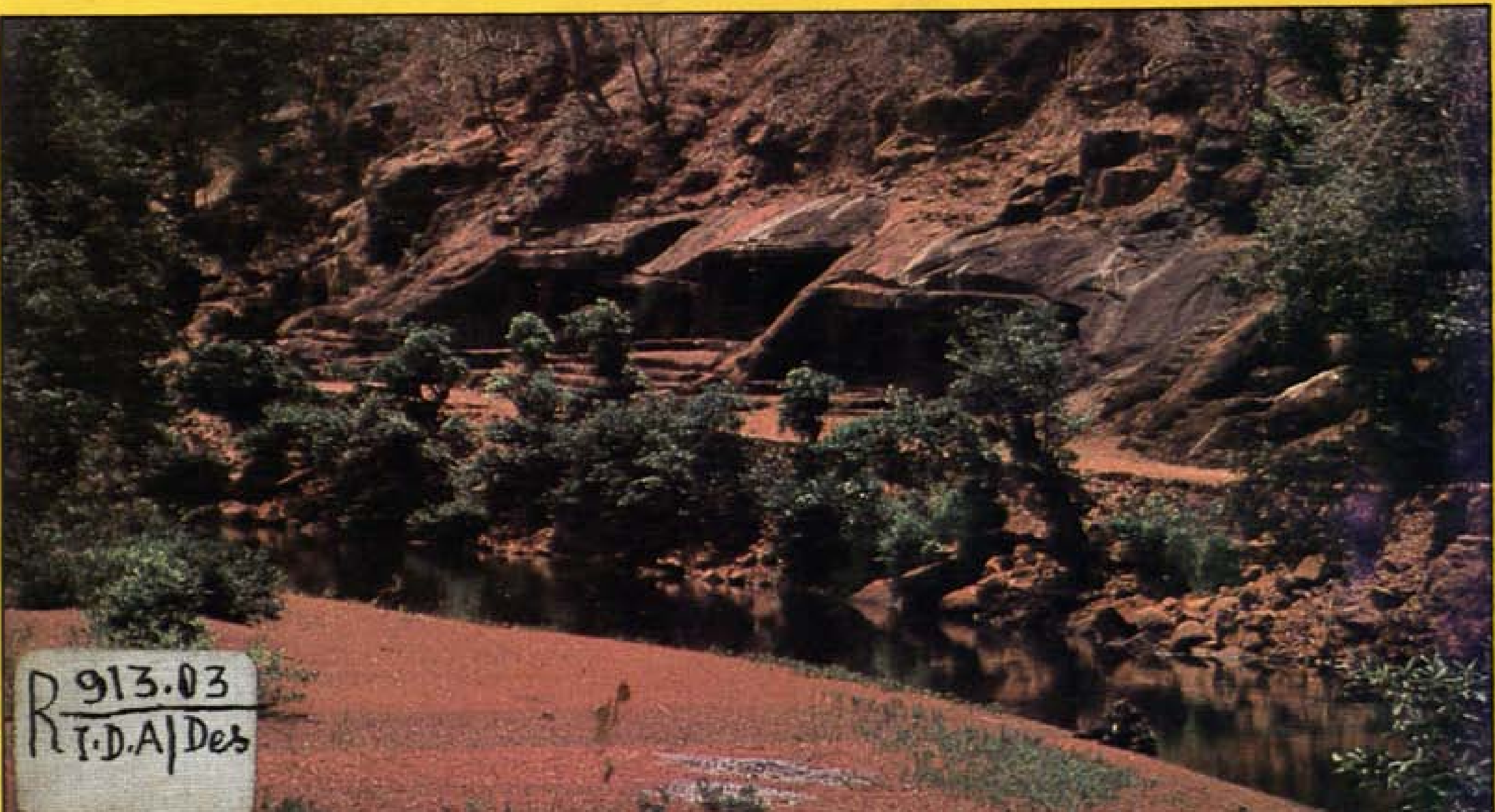
The Caves of Panhāle-Kājī

(Ancient Praṇālaka)





M. N. DESHPANDE

MEMOIRS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

The Caves of Panhāle-Kājī
(Ancient Pranālaka)

An art historical study of transition from Hinayana ,Tantric Vajrayana to Nath *Sampradāya*
[Third to fourteenth century A.D.]

MASI: 84

by
M.N. DESHPANDE
Former Director General
Archaeological Survey of India

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FOREWORD

The present work "Panhale Kaji" ancient Pranalake, is one of the two monographs, produced by Shri M.N. Deshpande, former Director General, Archaeological Survey of India when he was the Director of the Research Project entitled "Technological and Archaeological Studies of Western Indian Caves", sponsored and financed by the Nehru Centre, Bombay. The other monograph prepared by Shri Deshpande is "Early Hinayana Caves of Kondivte (Bombay subdistrict), Thanala and Khadsamla (Raigadh district)". We would like to record our gratitude to the authorities of the Nehru Centre, in particular to Dr. Raja Ramanna, General Secretary of the Centre, for having acceded to our request to publish both the monographs by the Archaeological Survey of India. Archaeological Survey of India itself has financed the excavations and scientific clearance operations of the caves to facilitate the research work of Shri Deshpande. It is, therefore, our privilege to place this monograph before the scholarly world. We do hope to publish the second volume on the Hinayana Caves ere long.

The value of the present work to the study and understanding of the religious and cultural history of Maharshtra,-particularly on the Buddhist rock-cut activity during the ascendancy of Vajrayana at Ellora and Kanheri has been set out by the author in his preface to this work. We are very grateful to Shri Deshpande for agreeing to the publication of this monograph by the Archaeological Survey of India. We hope this volume will be well received by the academic world.

I would like to record my appreciation to Shri K.N. Dikshit, Director (Publications) and his colleagues as well as M/s Vap Enterprises for this neat production.

(M.S. Nagaraja Rao)
Director General
Archaeological Survey of India

1.11.1986
New Delhi.

PREFACE

This monograph contains the results of my study of the group of caves situated at Panhale (Kaji) in district Sindhu-durg, Maharashtra State. These caves were brought to light by Shri Annasaheb Shirgaonkar of Dabhol in 1970, and were explored and later cleared of the debris by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Maharashtra. In my capacity as the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, I visited these caves, in the year 1974, and found them to be of great importance in the larger perspective of Indian rock-cut art and architecture and, at the same time, in reconstructing the cultural and religious history of Maharashtra. On my recommendation, the caves were brought under central protection by the Archaeological Survey of India as a National Monument.

After I joined the Nehru Centre,Bombay, as Advisor and also assumed charge as Director of its Archaeological Project: 'Technological and Architectural Survey of Western Indian Caves', I decided to study the Panhale caves, as they posed a number of questions about their age, affiliation and identification of the icons discovered in them . I visited these caves a number of times and found that they threw a flood of light on the religious and cultural history of Maharashtra, especially on the Buddhist rock-cut activity during the ascendency of Vajrayana at cave centres like Ellora and Kanheri. But, the Panhale caves are of singular importance for they specialize in the worship of Akshobhya,one of the five *dhyani* Buddhas of Vajrayana pantheon and other gods of his family *(kula)*. The history of cave architecture of Panhale, anciently called Pranalaka, begins in the 3rd century A.D. when monks of the Hinayana order of Buddhism started their activities in the Konkan region. Their early excavations are unpretentious *viharas* meant for quiet residence and meditation. Later, the centre developed into a prolific centre of tantric Vajrayana ritual and worship with Aksobhya as the chief patron god. In one of the caves was found an image of Mahacandarosana, a very fierce deity of the Aksobhya family. The find of these icons suggests a highly secret and esoteric tradition of tantric ritual worship.This tradition came to an end with the rising tide of brahmanism and the monastic centre saw the transformation of old Buddhist caves into temples for the worship of brahmanical gods and goddessess.

Surprisingly, the place gained importance as a centre of Natha *sampradaya,* with two caves, entirely devoted to the worship of Natha teachers like Matsyendranath, Gorakhanatha and other deities. One of the caves contains sculptural representations of the eighty-four Natha *siddhas,* a feature not to be met with elsewhere in India.

I am very happy to be able to complete this study and place it in the hands of the readers. This would not have been possible but for the facilities provided to me by the Nehru Centre, Bombay. Shri Rajnibhai Patel, who deserves my grateful thanks, is unfortunately not amongst us. I take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to him. He was one of the founder members and first General Secretary, Nehru Centre, Bombay and was instrumental in asking me take up this Project on Western Indian Caves. It was Dr. B.V. Subbarayappa, Director, Discovery of India Project of Nehru Centre who pursuaded me to join the Nehru Centre. I am thankful to him for his help .

Shri S.E.Sukhtankar, former Chief Executive of Nehru Centre was always willing to provide facilities and placed a vehicle at my disposal to enable me to make study-trips to the caves. Unfortunately he has since passed away but I consider it my duty to place on record my grateful thanks to him.

I was able to secure for my Project the services of Dr. Y.A. Raikar, as Senior Field Archaeologist, and of Shri P.A. Rane, as Draftsman-Artist. Both of them endeavoured their best to be of assistance to me in the study of the caves. I am thankful to both of them. I take this opportunity to thank Shri Sadashiv Gorakshakar, Director, Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, for allowing me to use the museum's library and more particularly for drawing my attention to the critical edition of *Mahacandarosana tantra* by Dr. Christopher S. George of the Harvard University, U.S.A. and which Shri Gorakshakar had just then acquired for the Museum's library. He also invited me to deliver the Coomaraswamy Memorial lectures on the subject of my research on Western Indian Caves in the year 1980 when I had just completed the first phase of my work. This gave me an opportunity of interacting with scholars and thus helped me in undertaking further work in greater depth.

Shri P.D. Chandwadkar, Exhibition Officer, Nehru Centre, visited Panhale in one of my trips and took some excellent photographs at a time, when I needed the services of a photographer. I thank him profusely for this help.

Dr. A.P. Jamkhedkar, Director of Archaeology and Museums of Maharashtra Government helped me in various ways. He allowed me access to the photographic record of the work carried out by his Department prior to the protection of the Panhale caves by the Archaeological Survey of India. He also accompanied me to Panhale during one of my field trips when I had the benefit of discussing some problems with him. I thank him for his valuable and friendly help.He also permitted me to reproduce some photographs of which the copyright rests in his Department.

Dr. Mrs. D. Mitra, my colleague and former Director General, Department of Archaeological Survey of India needs particular mention. At her instance Shri R.G. Pandeya, Superintending Archaeologist, S.W. Circle, Aurangabad and his staff helped me, at the site, by making camp arrangements for our stay near the caves and rendered invaluable help in photographing and studying the caves. I also record my appreciation for the help rendered by Sarvashri G.V. Vidavans, Senior Conservation Assistant, S.R. Gosavi, Conservation Assistant and L.K. Rao, Technical Assistant of the South Western Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India. They were of great help to me at the site and extended unstinted co-operation to me. Sarvashri Ramachandra Mangalore, Krishna Marle and Vishnu Bhalekar of the Survey made our stay at Panhale, very comfortable. Shri Sadashiv Jadhav, Chowkidar of the State Department of Archaeology was of great help to us and we depended on his resourcefulness for arrangements when the Archaeological Survey's team was not present at the site. Shri Karve Guruji and Shri Mahadev Jadhav of Panhale accompanied us to various nearby places of interest and we are obliged to them for their help and hospitality.

Shri P.G. Salvi, who succeeded Shri S.E. Sukhtankar as the Chief Executive of the Nehru Centre, also took interest in the progress of my work. At the conclusion of my project in November 1982, I was able to hand over to him, for publication, two manuscripts; one on Panhale Kaji caves and the other on early Hinayana caves of Thanala, Khadsamla, and Kondivte. Although he was keen to publish them as Nehru Centre publications and had contacted publishers for the purpose, he found it difficult to proceed with the publications due to financial constraints. At my suggestion, he contacted Dr. M.S. Nagaraja Rao, Director General Archaeological Survey of India, who readily agreed to publish both the manuscripts in the Monograph series of the Archaeological Survey of India, as the contents thereof related to National monuments protected by the Survey and its officers had actively co-operated with me in my field-work. I am extremely grateful to Dr. M.S. Nagaraja Rao for taking up this publication.

I thank Shri K.N. Dikshit, Director (Publications) of the Archaeological Survey of India for his interest in the speedy publication of the monograph. The staff of M/s. VAP

ENTERPRISES deserve my thanks for the extreme care and zeal with which they have endeavoured to bring out this publication.

My wife, Madhumalati, accompanied me to Panhale on all but one field trip and looked after the camp arrangements. The completion of this monograph is the result of her constant encouragement and goading.

The preface will be incomplete, if I do not mention how inevitably, I was led to the study of Pranalaka caves. My spiritual teacher, late Prof. R.D. Ranade has guided me throughout in interpreting many difficult religions and philosophical problems connected with these caves. This monograph is, therefore, humbly dedicated to his memory in the Birth Centenary year of that great scholar-saint.

M.N.DESHPANDE
Director General (Retd.)
Archaeological Survey of India

1.11.86
New Delhi

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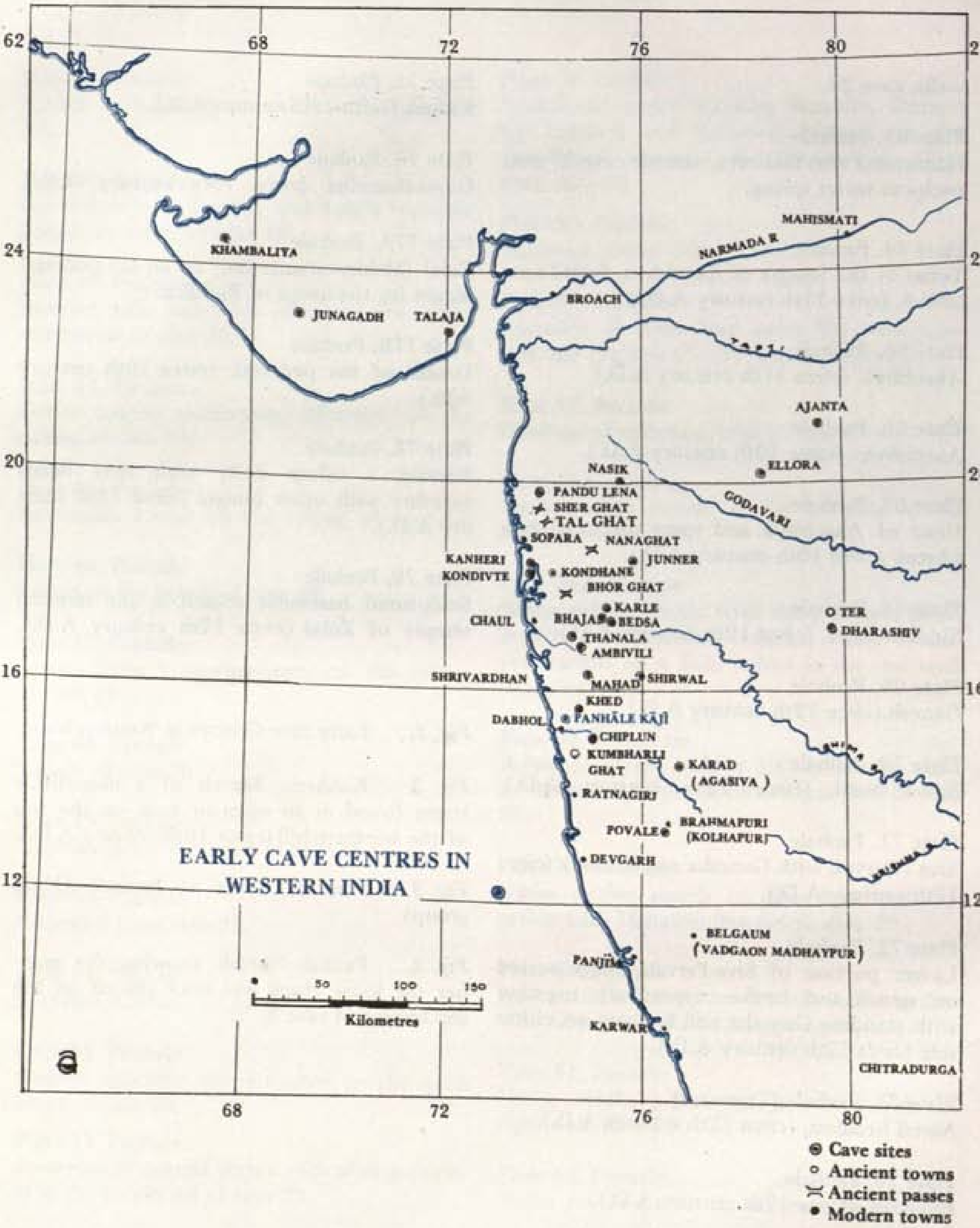
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EARLY CAVE CENTRES IN WESTERN INDIA
62
68
72
76
80
28
24
20
16
12
KHAMBALIYA
JUNAGADH
TALAJA
BROACH
NARMADA R
MAHISMATI
AJANTA
ELLORA
NASIK
GODAVARI
PANDU LENA
SHER GHAT
TAL GHAT
SOPARA
NANAGHAT
JUNNER
KANHERI
KONDIVTE
KONDHANE
BHOR GHAT
KARLE
CHAUL
BHAJA
BEDSA
TER
DHARASHIV
THANALA
AMBIVILI
SHRIVARDHAN
MAHAD
SHIRWAL
KHED
DABHOL
PANHĀLE KĀJĪ
CHIPLUN
KUMBHARLI GHAT
KARAD (AGASIVA)
RATNAGIRI
BRAHMAPURI (KOLHAPUR)
POVALE
DEVGARH
BELGAUM (VADGAON MADHAYPUR)
PANJIM
KARWAR
CHITRADURGA
50
100
150
Kilometres
a
Cave sites
Ancient towns
Ancient passes
Modern towns

1

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Panhale Kaji (Long. 73° – 17′E; Lat. 17° 39 N) is a small village consisting of twelve separate localities (wadis)[1] dispersed in a small area measuring about 3 sq. kms. It is situated in the Dapoli *taluka* of Sindhudung district, on the banks of a mountain stream called Kotjai, and near its confluence with another stream called Dhakti. The place is 19 kms.by road, to the west of village Wakavali, on the Khed–Dapoli road. It can be approached by the State Transport bus going to Pangari from Dapoli or Bombay, and the visitor should alight at Panhale Kaji,7 kms. short of Pangari. From the Panhale Kaji bus-stop, the cave site is about 1½ kms. to the south-west. The total distance from Bombay to the caves is about 280 kms. Not far from Panhale Kaji to the east are situated, at Unhavare, hot water springs[2] but the bus going to that place does not touch Panhale Kaji.

The caves are 29 in number and of these 28 are situated on the right bank of Kotjai, in a hill-slope,on the top of which lies a commanding hill-fort, called Panhale Durga (*vide* fig. 2).While caves 1 to 16 are about 50 to 100 meters away from the riverbed, caves 18 to 28 lie close to the river bank. Cave 29 which lies near Bagwadi is about 1½ kms. away from the main group to its south overlooking, in the distance, the stream called Dhakti. The close proximity of the main group of caves to the river, near its tidal point, had led to the total filling up of the caves with sand and debris, after the caves had been abandoned and the protective ancient embankment on the river side had given way. It may be noted that the river Kotjai, traversing a distance of about 6 kms. in the southerly direction meets the Dabhol creek formed by Vashisthi at Pangari, where the creek forms an estuary meeting the Arabian sea at Dabhol, with the port of Dabhol to its north and Anjanwel Fort to its South.Like the caves in main group,the cave 29 called Gaur lena,was also buried under debris and forgotten and the area had subsequently been brought under cultivation.

The Panhale Kaji village and its neighbourhood lie in one of the most silvan and picturesque surroundings amidst mountain ridges of the Sahyadri and is drained by hill streams that have cut deep ravines having luxuriant green cover formed by forests ranging from thick to sparse.

DISCOVERY

The caves which had gone into oblivion sometime after the 14th cent. A.D. remained unknown to the outside world. The local people knew only one cave called Ganesa Lena (cave 21) as it was partially accessible and the image of Ganesh (Pl. 49) in the verandah of that cave was under worship by villagers. In 1973, the Department of Archaeology, Maharashtra State on the basis of information supplied by Shri Annasaheb Shirgaonkar of Dabhol, undertook

explorations in the area.According to a report published in the Indian Express dated 23rd May, 1973, the State Department of Archaeology brought to light a cave consisting of a verandah, hall and inner room, with images of Ganesha, Bhairava and a Goddess. It appears from the description that this could be cave 17 for there is a specific mention in the press report of lattice windows of octagonal design, a feature which is extant only in this cave. In a subsequent report published in Indian Archaeology 1973-74 – A Review, (p. 22,) it is mentioned that in continuation of the previous year's work (1972–73), which was mainly of the nature of clearance of debris, the Department exposed ancient caves with sculptures, belonging to Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain[3] sects. The two caves near Devaranwadi were considered to be a *vihara* and a brahmanical cave and these were assigned to the 11th cent. A.D. It was also mentioned that besides pottery, the excavation brought to light a terracotta lamp and polychrome glass bangles.

Further work at this cave group was taken up by the Archaeological Survey of India after the caves were inspected by the Director General of Archaeology[4] and were considered to be of national importance. Further clearance of debris therefore, was undertaken on behalf of the South-western Circle of the Survey by a team consisting of Sarvashri L.S. Rao, G.V. Vidhwans and assisted by S.R. Gosavi (Indian Archaeology – 1977 – 78 A Review,p. 41). Among other notable items of works undertaken by the team was the excavation on the top of caves 6 to 9, where a wall (12.19 m.x 0.90 m.) constructed of dressed blocks of stone (*vide* Plate 11) was uncovered together with a drain emanating from behind the wall and passing over the façade of the caves. They also brought to light, on the cave top, a rock-cut base with a square socket meant for positioning a *stupa* (*vide* Plate 10)presumably the one among the four lying in front of cave 6.

Although not reported by the Survey, the team brought to light remains of two structural temples on the right bank of the river Dhakti, half immersed in the current of the stream which shows Seshshayi Vishnu, while the other temple appears to have been dedicated to Saiva worship on the basis of the remain of the *linga* in the *garbhagriha.* Besides, there are large boulders in the river bed carved variously with stray images and some placed in ornamental niches.

The author undertook a detailed study of these cave groups as a part of the Project: 'Technological and Architectural Survey of Western Indian Caves', while working as Advisor to the Discovery of India Project of Nehru Centre, Bombay. He visited the cave site, four times during 1980-82. He also visited Buddhist caves at Mahad (Pale and Kol groups), Khed and Chiplun and the brahmanical cave shrine at Dabhol with a view to understanding the background of rock-cut activity in the region.

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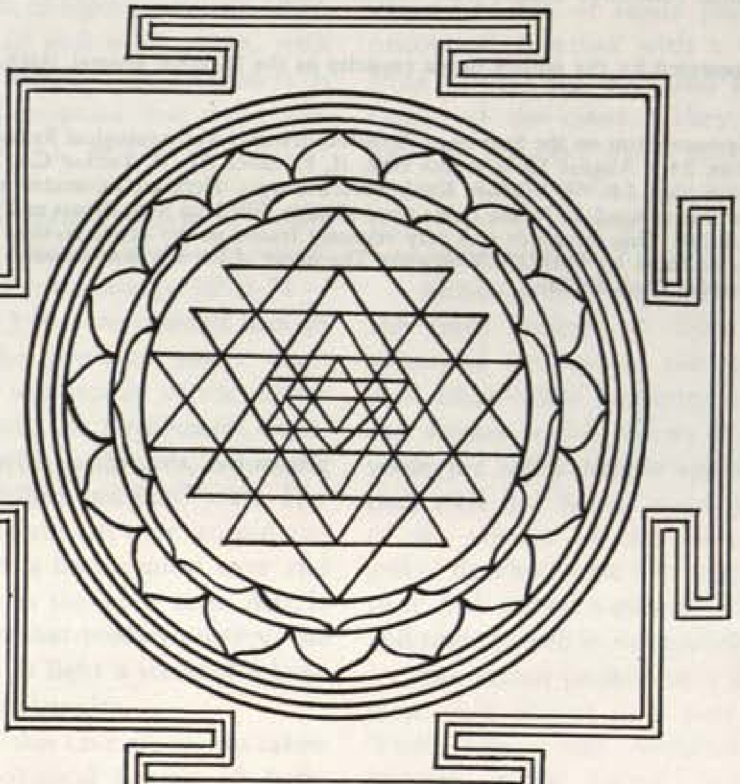
1. The twelve wadis of Panhale Kaji with the number of houses mentioned against each one are as follows : Durgawadi (25), Mathwadi (2), Baghwadi (5), Devaranwadi (15),Gavanwadi (25),Kolwadi (30),Pimpalwadi (3),Tepwadi (2), Neeli or More Wadi(20), Bhattwadi (5), and Buddha wadi (9). The name of the last wadi is of recent origin.

2. The proximity of hot springs with Buddhist caves is seen also at the following centres in Konkan. 1. Vajreswari near Kanheri, 2. Unhavare (Pali-Sudhagad) near Thanala caves, and 3. Sava, near Pale and Kol caves (Mahad),Khed springs near Khed Caves and Chiplun springs near Chiplun caves.

3. Among the sculptures recovered by the State Department of Archaeology, there is not a single Jain sculpture. It seems that some Aksobhya images were mistaken as Jain *tirthankaras*. No cave at Panhale Kaji has any Jain affiliation.

4. The Caves were inspected by the author in his capacity as the Director general, Archaeological Survey of India.

5. In a printed "Memorandum on the Survey of Architectural and Archaeological Remains" in the Bombay Presidency submitted on 24th August 1870 to the Hon. H. Pendock ST. G. Tucker C.S. Member of Council, Jas Burgess mentions on page 34: "4. Panhale Kani, Suvarnadurg – Here are excavated seats on a rock near the river". It appears that around 1870 the caves were already filled up with debris and perhaps, some rock-cut seats alone were visible. This reference was very recently traced in the office records of S.W.Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India by Shri G.V.Vidhwans. The name of the site is mentioned as Panhale Kani and it appears to be an error for Panhale Kaji.



Shri-Çakra
Diagrammatic representation of Lalita whose rock-cut image is carved in Gaur *lena*, cave, 29 at Panhale. (see Pl. 59).

2

Historical and Architectural Perspective

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Situated in southern Konkan, Panhale Kaji is a little known village in district Sindhudurg. It finds mention as Pranalaka[1] in two Silahara inscriptions of 12th cent. A.D. and the word 'Kaji' which goes with it appears to have been added after the area came under the possession of the Adil Shahi Sultanate of Bijapur, early in the seventeenth century, when the Sultans captured the port of Dabhol and appointed a Qazi to look after legal and other related functions. However, there is significant architectural and fragmentary, yet important, palaeographic evidence enabling us to push back the antiquity of the Panhale caves to the 3rd cent. A.D. about which a detailed discussion would appear in chapter 4 dealing with the chronology of the caves. Further, there are other comparable ancient Buddhist cave sites at Khed and Chiplun, not far from Panhale Kaji, which must be taken into account for reconstructing the total perspective of architectural activity at Panhale (*Vide* Pl. 1).

In the Buddhist cave group at Khed, there is a large *vihara*, with an oblong cell in the backwall containing a *stupa*, and three cells for monks, excavated in the side walls of the main hall. The group also has four other smaller caves provided with rock-cut water cisterns. The group is situated near the town, in a hill, behind the local high school building. About a kilometre away, in the same range, is situated another cave with two cells in the rear wall. This cave group can be assigned to the 3rd cent. A.D. on the basis of the architectural style of the *stupa* which has a moulded base, a plain band for carving out the *vedika* at the top of the drum, rounded *anda* with *harmika* capped by a stepped member (Plate 1).

At Chiplum, about half a kilometer south of the town, there is a group of four Buddhist caves, known as Pancha Pandava caves. Of these cave 3 is a *caitya-griha*, 3.57 m. wide, 4.6 m. deep 2.45 m. high. Rectangular on plan, the *stupa* contained in it is one metre away from the rear wall. The upper portion of the *anda* is missing, but the remnants of the circular *chhatra* carved on the ceiling are intact. The other three caves are small *bhikshu-grihas*. At a higher altitude, almost near the summit of the hill, in a crescent shaped outcrop, a cave was attempted, perhaps a *caitya-griha* with a vaulted ceiling.

It appears that with Khed as the principal centre, Hinayana Buddhist monks took up excavation of the monastic centres of Chiplun and Panhale. The mercantile community of Dabhol perhaps contributed to the excavation of the caves and the maintenance of the religious community of monks in this region .

The area containing these three Buddhist centres was connected with monastic and commercial urban centres on the Deccan mainland through ancient passes (*ghats*), namely Amboli, Tivara and Kumbharli connecting the port-town of Dabhol to Karad via Chiplun, and a small village of Patan lying enroute. There is a Buddhist cave in the village of Patan and a large monastic establishment at



Plate 1. Khed
Stupa in the central cell of the rear wall. *circa* third century A.D. (Copyright:— Archaeological Survey of India).

Karad, which was an important ancient town. The monastic establishment near Karad, the ancient *Karahataka*, is known as the Jakhinwadi group of caves located in the Agashiva hills, not far from the ancient township which has been identified with a large mound known as *Pantacha kot*, on the confluence of the rivers Koyana and Krishna. Further, about 65 kms. to the south of Karad is located the ancient Satvahana site of Brahmapuri on the banks of the river Panchaganga near the modern town of Kolhapur. The site has yielded evidence of commercial contacts with the Mediterranean world. Many Buddhist antiquities found here indicate that there was a sizeable population of Buddhist laity and it was also a centre of Buddhism. Not far from Kolhapur is located the Buddhist cave monastery of Povala. It is very likely that the trading community of Brahmapuri contributed their mite in the spread of Buddhism and promotion of rock-cut activity in the Konkan region.

Panhale caves are thus of singular importance for they throw light on the development of rock-cut architecture in the Konkan area from the 3rd to the 14th cent. A.D. Although normally the Mahayana phase of rock architecture follows the Hinayana activity, it was Vijrayana which took control of the monastic establishment of Panhale soon after the initial rock-cut effort commenced here under late Hinayana influence, in *circa* 3rd cent. A.D. came to an end. One is left to surmise that is in the troubled times that followed the end of Satavahana rule in the Deccan, the Mahayana monks did not proceed far beyond Mahad in the coastal area where we notice feeble Mahayana activity.In the magnificent Buddhist *Sangharama* at Pale near Mahad,Mahayana[2] influence is clearly palpable. In this cave group few figures of Buddha flanked by Bodhisattvas came to be added in the Hinayana caves but a large *vihara* with a chapel (cave 1) was attempted in *circa* 5th cent. A.D.

It appears tnat in the period that ensued the end of the Satavahana power in the Deccan in the 3rd cent. A.D. Konkan, with its port-towns became a bone of contention between rival political powers which continued to flourish with varying fortunes till they were absorbed into the empire of the Badami Chalukyas. However, it must be mentioned that before the rise of the Chalukyas,there were two other powers which made their influence felt in the Deccan, the first was that of the Vakatakas of Vastagulma (Vashim in Akola District) and the other of Kadambas of Vaijayanti (Banawasi in Karnataka). Although under the Vakatakas, Buddhism received patronage and the Ajanta caves stand as a monument of their tolerance and deep interest in promotion of art, they do not seem to have effectively controlled the coastal region. The Kadambas, with their founder, Mayuravarman, a brahmin by birth, patronised brahmanism and although the family controlled the Konkan area, we do not have any brahmanical monuments that can be attributed to them in the coastal region except perhaps the Arvelum cave[3] in Goa. The Chalukyas who were great patrons of art and architecture and who had overthrown the Mauryas of Konkan were responsible for prestigious creations of brahmanical caves and temples at Badami in Karnataka but they do not seem to have erected any monument in southern Konkan.

Dr. Shobhana Gokhale, published Panhale Kaji plates of Vikramaditya of *Saka* year 1061, in the Marathi quarterly *Itihasa ani*

Samskriti no. XXIX. The object of the plates was to mention the details of the grant made by Aparaditya – I on the occasion of lunar eclipse, on Monday the 15th *tithi* of the bright of Ashvina in the expired *saka* year 1061 corresponding to A.D. 9th October 1139. It mentions the grant of village *Khairadi* situated in the *visaya* of Pranalaka together with the orchards and also the royal tax in *drammas* levied on houses and trees, situated there in made in favour of a brahmin by name Rudrabhattopadhyaya hailing from Varanasi to provide for the performance of *bali, charu* etc., reception of guests and maintenance of the donees' family.

The other reference to Pranalaka occurs in the Chiplun stone inscription[4] of Mallikarjuna, in the *saka* year 1078. It mentions the appointment of one Supraya as the *dandadhipati*(administrator) of the Pranalaka *desha*. He was ordered to make the town of Pranala his headquarters. It is also stipulated that his oldest son, should succeed him and make the same city his headquarters.

From these two inscriptions, it seems, that Vikramaditya was very dear to Aparaditya – I (*circa* A.D. 1127–1148) who had appointed him in supercession of his other sons, to govern the southern part of his kingdom in *circa* A.D. 1138 with his capital at Pranalaka. It appears that after the death of Aparaditya the kingdom was partitioned between Haripaladeva (*circa* A.D. 1148–1155) probably his elder son, who obtained north Konkan, and Vikramaditya continued to rule in south Konkan . No successor of Vikramaditya is known and it is likely that Harapaladeva may have extended his rule to south Konkan after the death of Vikramaditya.

In so far as Vajrayana influence at Panhale Kaji is concerned, it appears to have reached here from two directions. In northern Konkan, Kanheri had already developed into a very important Vajrayana centre. Ellora, in central Deccan, had also come into prominence as a very active Vajrayana monastic centre influencing other places in Andhra with which it was connected through an ancient trade route passing though Prathishthana and Tagara. Itinerant monks from these monasteries must have travelled to south Konkan along the ancient routes among which the coastal route lay roughly parallel to the western coast. At Kanheri, this influence had reached from eastern India (Orissa and Bihar) as can be surmised from the Kanheri inscription of Kapardin II of the *Saka* year 775. The inscription records that during the reign of the king, Kapardin II, one Gomin Avighnakara, a devout worshiper of the Sugata (Buddha), who had hailed from the Gauda country, made a permanent endowment (*akshya-nivi*) of one hundred *drammas* for the construction of the meditation rooms for monks residing in the *maharaja mahavihara* (known as Darbar Hall, cave 11) at Krishnagiri. The inscription corresponds to 12th September A.D. 854 and here Pullasakti is mentioned as the lord of the entire konkana *(asesa-Konkanavallabha)*. The recent discovery of a large number of clay tablets inscribed with the Buddhist creed in characters of the 10th cent. A.D. at Kanheri, similar to the Nalanda clay-seals, is another evidence of Vajrayana influence, in addition to the statuary in different caves like the eleven-headed Avalokitesvara and the litany of Avalokitesvara flanked by Tara and Bhrikuti. The occurrence of painted figures of manushi *Buddhas* in a cave at Kanheri is significant, for the same subject is repeated in sculpture in cave 1 at Panhale. Even at Ellora,

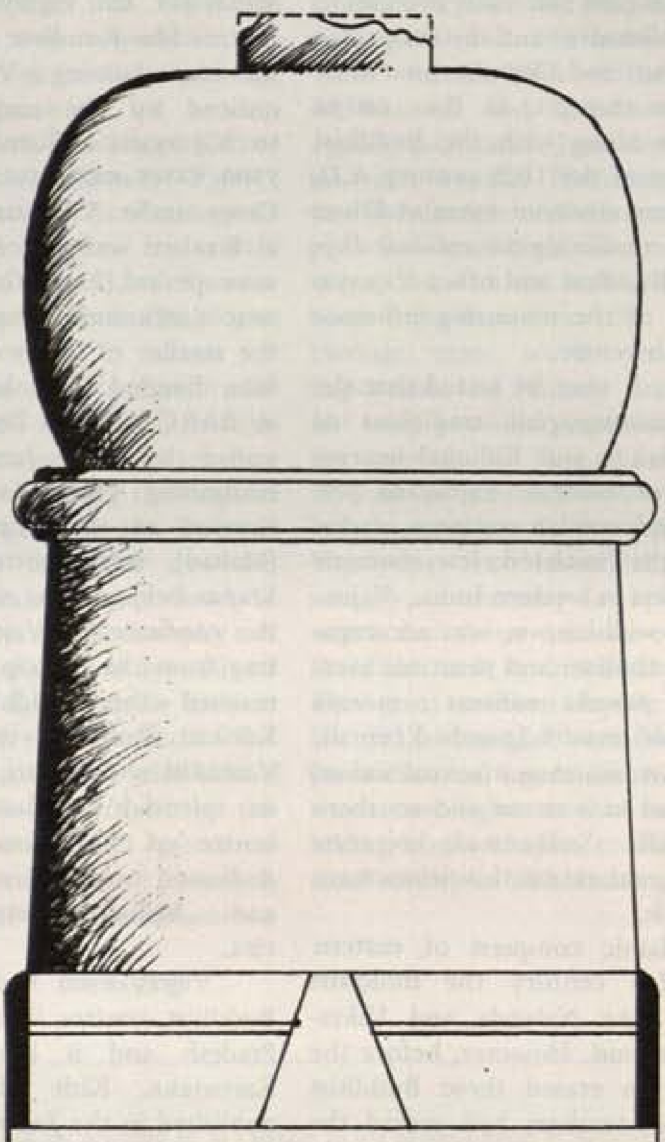


Plate 2. Kondivte

Loose monolithic *stupa* with a Vajrayana deity on the drum,under worship in a temple near the cave site, *circa* 10th century A.D. (Copyright:– Archaeological Survey of India).



Plate 3. Bombay (BARC Campus)
Four-handed Avalokitesvara, *circa* 7th century A.D. (Courtesy:- Director of Archaeology, Maharashtra State).



Kanheri
Sketch of a *Stupa* found in an open tank on the top of the caves.

we find that the Vajrayana doctrine and connected gods and rites had made in-roads in the monastic establishment and the sculptures of Tara, Mahamayuri and Chunda came to be carved, as a later thought, in the *caitya* (Visvakarma) cave along with the Buddhist creed in characters of the 10th century A.D. The two large three storeyed caves at Ellora (Nos. 10 and 11) containing the colossal *dhyani* and *manushi* Buddhas and other Vajrayana subjects speak of the mounting influence of Vajrayana at this centre.

In retrospect, it may be stated that the intellectual and iconographic traditions of eastern India (Gauda and Kalinga) bearing indelible impact of esoteric Vajrayana practices with cryptic formulae and rites, understood only by the initiated few, become increasingly manifest in western India. Vajrayana ritual, as is well-known, was accompanied by sexual symbolism and practices involving the use of *pancha makaras : matsya* (fish) *mamsa* (flesh) *mudra* (parched cereal), *madira* (wine), and *maithuna* (sexual union) became widespread in western and southern India. The prolific *Sadhanmala* literature reflects, to a very great extent, this debasement of the original faith.

With the Islamic conquest of eastern India in the 12th century the Buddhist monastic centres like Nalanda and Vikramasila came to an end. However, before the hand of destruction erased these Buddhist centres the *tantric* teachers had spread the Vajrayana doctrine to distant places in Maharashtra and Andhra-desa[5] where it prospered and lingered on for a long time. Pranalaka, situated in the mountain fastnesses of Sahyadri, however, nurtured the *tantric* tradition for a very long time till it was supplanted by the followers of Nath *Sampradaya*. This process of change from Mahayana to Vajrayana is seen at other centres like Kondivte where a loose monolithic *stupa* bearing a Vajrayana deity (Pl.2) was noticed by the author as one belonging to Vajrayana influence. These early Hinayana caves came to be styled as Mahakala Caves under Vajrayana influence. Similarly at Kanheri was noticed a loose *stupa* of the same period. (Fig.3). This was probably placed near a structural temple built on the top of the smaller of the two hills. A loose image of four handed Avalokitesvara (Pl. 3) found in BARC Campus Bombay, brought to my notice by A.P. Jamkhedkar bespeaks of continuing Vajrayana influence with north Konkan as the principal centre. At Pale (Mahad), were recently noticed two loose *Stupas* belonging to circa 10th cent. *A.D.* and this confirms that Vajrayana influence emanating from the principal centre of Krishnagiri reached other Buddhist centres in southern Konkan. Panhale lying in the area between Vashisthi and Savitri, however, developed in its splendid isolation, into a very prolific centre of Vajrayana worship with shrines dedicated to the worship of Akshobhya, and Mahacandarosana and Siddhaikavira.

Vajrayanism had also influenced early Buddhist centres like Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh and it had similarly penetrated Karnataka. Kirit Mankodi in his paper published in the *Journal of Oriental Institute*, (Vol.xx No. 4, June 71) describes sculptures from Belgavi bearing figures of Tara, Avalokitesvara and a frieze containing Aksobhya flanked by Tara and Avalokitesvara on one side and Manjusri and Prajna-paramita on the other, belonging to *circa* 11th cent. A.D. Mankodi also refers to an inscription of

that period found at Dambal in Dharwar district. Thus it will be seen that Vajrayana centres in Andhra-desa were responsible for the spread of *tantric* Vajrayana worship in Karnataka where it persisted for a very long time. It is very likely that from Karnataka,under the later chalukyas,*tantric* Vajrayana Buddhism penetrated the Konkan region. It will be seen that the image of the *tantric* deity, Mahacandraosana found at Panhale shows striking influence of late Chalukyan plastic art style.

The advent of the yogic and reformist movement spearheaded by Gorakshanath had reached the Deccan and some scholars still go to the extent of tracing the original home of this great teacher to the Deccan. Although there is no definitive evidence about the period Gorakshanatha lived in and propagated the Natha philosophy of *yoga*, throughout the length and breadth of India, scholars tend to agree that he lived in *circa* 10th and 11th cent. A.D. The devotional *'Warakrari'* movement with Vitthal of Pandarpur as its God is traced to the pioneering works of two saint-poets of Maharashtra namely Jnanadeva and Namdeva. Jnandeva (A.D. 1275-1296) wrote *Bhavartha Dipika* popularly known as *Jnanesvari*, a commentary on the *Bhagavadgita* in the year A.D. 1290 and this book is considered the 'bible' of the *Warakaris*, although the works of Ekanath and Tukaram are also hailed equally sacrosanct. Jnanadeva was initiated by his elder brother Nivrittinatha who in turn was the disciple of Gahininatha, a direct disciple of Gorakhnath. There are many places connected with the Nathas in Maharashtra but none was traced in the Konkan area till Panhale came to be studied. The prime importance of Panhale lies in the fact that it not only provides an archaeological basis for the spread of Natha *Sampradaya* in the Deccan but shows how the new faith, coming in the wake of the spread of *tantric* Vajrayana was historically, ethically and socially, a necessity for uplifting the society which had been debased on account of the Buddhist and Brahmanical *tantric* practices. The great modern mystic and philosopher Dr. R.D. Ranade[6] considers the advent of tantricism as a great aberration and Panhale sheds new light on this crucial period, thus adding a new chapter to the religious and cultural history of Maharashtra.

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1. Hereafter Panhale(kaji) will be referred to as Panhale as the present name is derived from Pranalaka, mentioned in the inscriptions.

2. Although there is no clear-cut evidence of Mahayana activity at Panhale, the Manushi Buddhas which emerged as part of Mahayana pantheon are found at Panhale, in cave 2. The sculptures of the seven standing Manushi Buddhas, came to be added during the period of transition when the caves were taken over by followers of Vajrayana. It is likely that the Cave also contained in *the garbha-griha*, the image of Buddha in *bhumisparsa mudra*. The image in question has not been found but a large pedestal with the *dharma chakra* flanked by deer is found at Panhale in a modern temple. This is discussed later in the last chapter (see plates 77A & 77B).

3. Soundara Rajan, *Caves Temples of the'Deccan,* 1981 pp.44-66 He considers the Arvelum caves to be the work of Kadambas. Also see Gritli V.Mitterwallner, Rock-cut cave temples of Arvelum, Goa pp.165-173, in *Madhu: Recent Researches in Indian Archaeology and History,* ed. M.S. Nagaraja Rao . She dates the Arvelum caves to the first quarter of the fifth century A.D.

4. These plates together with the chiplun stone inscription of Mallikarjuna mentioned earlier have been edited by Dr. V.V. Mirashi, see *Inscriptions of the Silaharas,* Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum Vol. VI pp. 133-142 and 150-153.

5. In this paper ; Some Tantric icons from Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh *(Journal of the Andhra Pradesh Archives,* Hyderabad Vol. V, No. 2 pp.11-12), K.Krishnamurthy identifies three images appearing at pl. 1, pl. II and the central figure on plate IV as those of Buddha. In fact all these images are of Aksobhya who is invariably shown in *bhumisparsa-mudra* but with the *vajra* shown on his lotus seat.This is further explained in Chapter VI where the iconography of Aksobhya is dealt with.

6. Ranade R.D. *Pathway to God in Marathi literature.* Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan Bombay, p.5 and 6.

3

Description of the Caves

DESCRIPTION OF THE CAVES

CAVE 1

Starting from the eastern end of the series of 28 caves at Panhale, situated on the right bank of the stream called Kotjai, the first cave facing north-west has a raised open rock-cut court. A low bench runs along the southern end of the platform from the centre of which a doorway leads in to a rectangular cave which measures 3.70 m. x 3.78 m.and is 1.97 m.high. The door frame(0.80m.x 1.61m.)has two rectangular *sakhas* with a plain *lalata-bimba* in the centre. To the south of the entrance is another niche, rather irregular, having a semicircular top.

Behind the door jambs are sockets,about 7.5 cms.deep,with corresponding sockets on the ceiling for fixing wooden door leaves. There was an arrangement for closing the door and keeping it in position by means of crossbar *(aragala)*

Inside the cave there is a bench on the western side with a rock-cut head-rest at the southern end. In the back wall is a rectangular niche (1.45 m. x 1.05 m.) within which is another deeper niche (1.40 m. x . 84 m) with a semicircular top, meant for placing the cult image which is now missing. In front of the niche, is a low platform.

CAVE 2

This cave nearly facing north has an open courtyard and is entered from it through a wide central opening (3.85m. wide) formed by a heavy octagonal pillar, on either side, resting on a broad parapet wall (Plate 4) and with a pilaster at either end. The pillars have a two armed voluted capital with a *nagabandha* at the centre, although one of the arms of the western pillar is bereft of the *nagabandha.* Above the pillar capitals, is carved a heavy lintel running all along the length of the cave apparently supporting the projecting eaves and the roof. At the west end of the verandah, a cell measuring 3m.x 4.55 m.and 2.20 m. high has been excavated (probably as an afterthought) interrupting the original bench which ran along the wall, the head-rest at the southern end being still in position. On the corresponding eastern side there is a similar bench with a damaged head-rest and,in the centre of the wall is carved a niche with a moulded *adhisthana* over which is a socket for receiving the tenon of an image.

A doorway having a broad rock-cut step once decorated with *candrasila* leads into the astylar hall from the verandah. The doorway is flanked by a wide rectangular window. (22.10 m 1.20 m.) on either side, provided with a groove,in the thickness of the wall, for receiving a perforated stone screen[1]. The door-frame has three *dvarasakhas* with corresponding off-sets. The rectangular *Lalata-bimba* is plain.

The interior oblong hall measuring (10 m. x 5.80 m.) has a bench running along its east,west and south but the one on the southern side is interrupted by two openings to the cells in the back wall, of which one is in

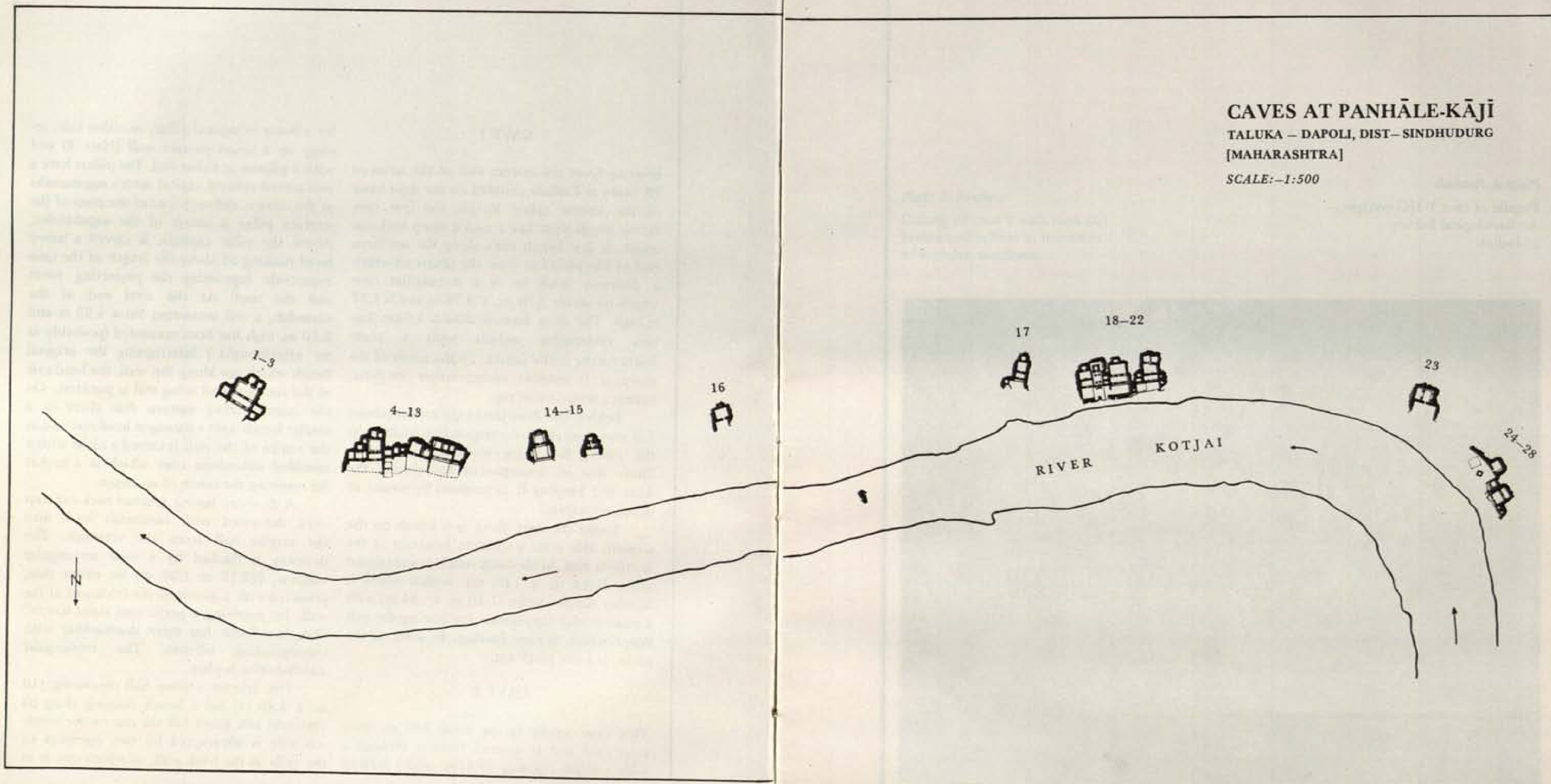

CAVES AT PANHĀLE-KĀJĪ
TALUKA – DAPOLI, DIST– SINDHUDURG
[MAHARASHTRA]
SCALE:–1:500
1–3
4–13
14–15
16
17
18–22
23
24–28
RIVER
KOTJAI
N

Plate 4. Panhale

Façade of cave 1-3(Copyright:– Archaeological Survey of India).



Plate 5. Panhale

Ceiling of cave 2 with rock-cut beams and rafters in imitation of wooden members.

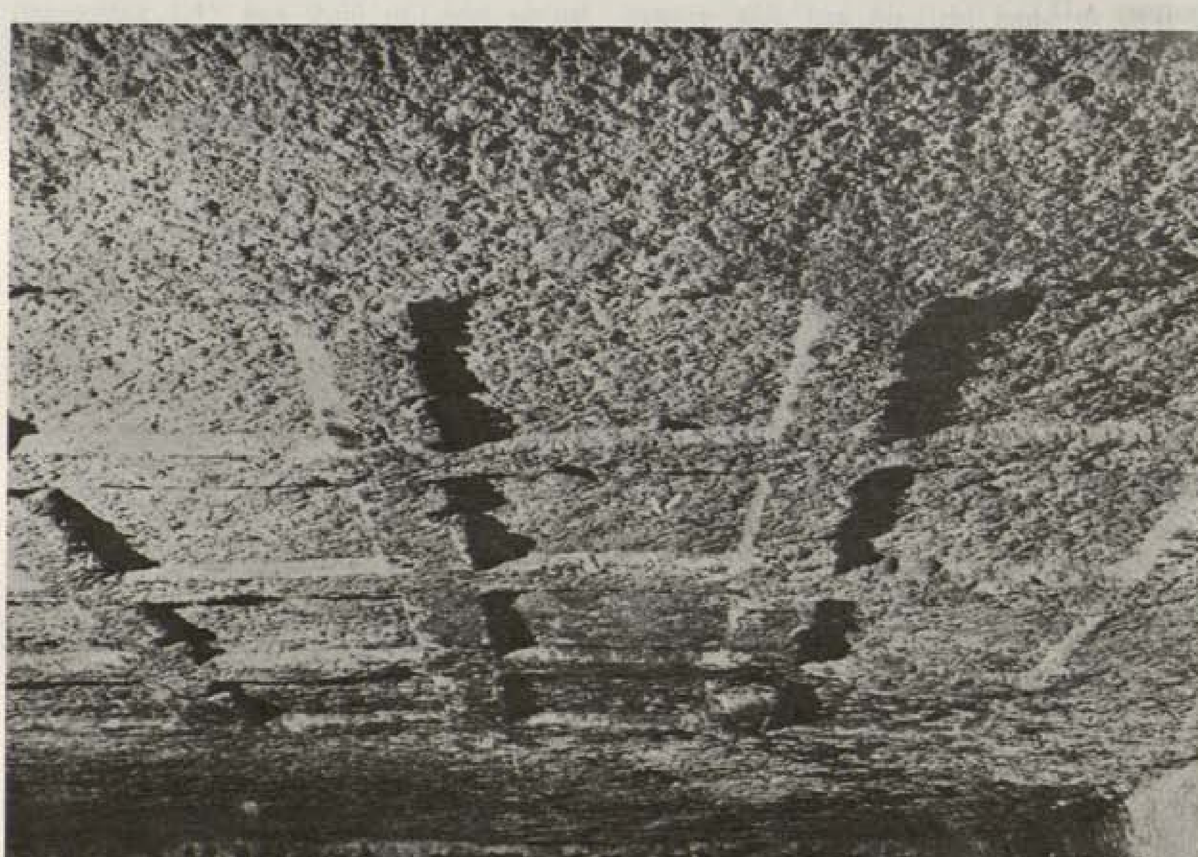


Plate 6. Panhale

Standing *manushi* Buddhas on the rear wall.(*circa* 10th century A.D.).



the centre and the other on the western side.

The ceiling of this hall is plain except in the central portion, nearer the entrance, where it is divided into sixteen sunk squares demarcated by rock-cut members imitating raflers and beams[2] of a wooden structure (Plate 6). The ceiling is slightly sloping towards the doorway.

The door opening of the *garbhagriha* is similar to the outer doorway in respect of the *dvarasakha* but has an additional narrow angular course at the junction of the *dvara-sakha.* Over the central doorway is a plain *lalata-bimba;* and a corresponding projection on the door sill. Within the *garbha-griha* (measuring 3.43 m.x 3.05 m.) and against the back wall, there is a low platform almost as wide as the entrance doorway having triangular mortise hole for receiving the tenon of the image. In the back wall are two vertical sockets for fixing a wooden *prabhavali* over the image which is now missing.

The only sculptural decoration in the cave is a frieze of seven standing *manushi* Buddhas with their faces and hands damaged. (Plate 6). The frieze is 1.7 m. x 0.30 m. Each figure is carved in a rectangular niche formed by roughly hewn pilasters , and capped by a conical arch. All the figures are generally frontal, and in *samabhanga* excepting the fourth one which is in slight *tribhanga.* The seven figures are those of, Vipasyi, Sikhi, Visvabhu, Krakuchchanda Kanakamuni, Kasyapa and Sakya–simha. In western India, we find the *manushi* Buddhas painted above the entrance doorway of the Vakataka *vihara* (cave 17) at Ajanta. At Ajanta however, they are shown seated and along with Maitreya the future Buddha. In cave 12 at Ellora seated *manushi* Buddhas are carved under their respective trees. A frieze of standing *manushi* Buddha[4] together with Maitreya is reported from Bihar. It is a piece of the 9th century A.D. and its exact provence is not mentioned. It bears a Chinese inscription on the pedestal. Another specimen of standing *manushi* Buddha[4] is preserved in Indian Museum (Plate 7). It bears (no.B.G.–83) and is illustrated as fig. 45 in *Indian Buddhist Iconography* by B.Bhattacharya).The Panhale *manushi* Buddha frieze may be placed to 10th cent. A.D.

The *manushi* Buddhas of Panhale Kaji wear *Sanghati* and their left shoulders are covered.They do not have the diagnostic trees over their heads. The first figure on the eastern side has his right hand in *abhaya mudra* while the left hand holds some indeterminate object or perhaps the end of the *sanghati*. The second one has his left hand hanging down and touching the thigh while the right hand is akimbo. The third has his right hand in *varada mudra* but what he holds in his left hand is not clear. Above the shoulder of this figure there is a round hole which may have been intended for keeping some relic. The right hand of the fourth is akimbo, what it holds in the left hand cannot be determined. The fifth has his right hand damaged. The sixth one perhaps held a *kamandalu* in the right, but the object in the left hand is not clear.The seventh Buddha has his right hand in *abhaya mudra* and his left may have carried either a *vajra* or a lotus.

The cell on the western side in the back-wall (2.40m. x 2.35m.)has an *adhishthana* for placing a cult image, now missing.

General Observations

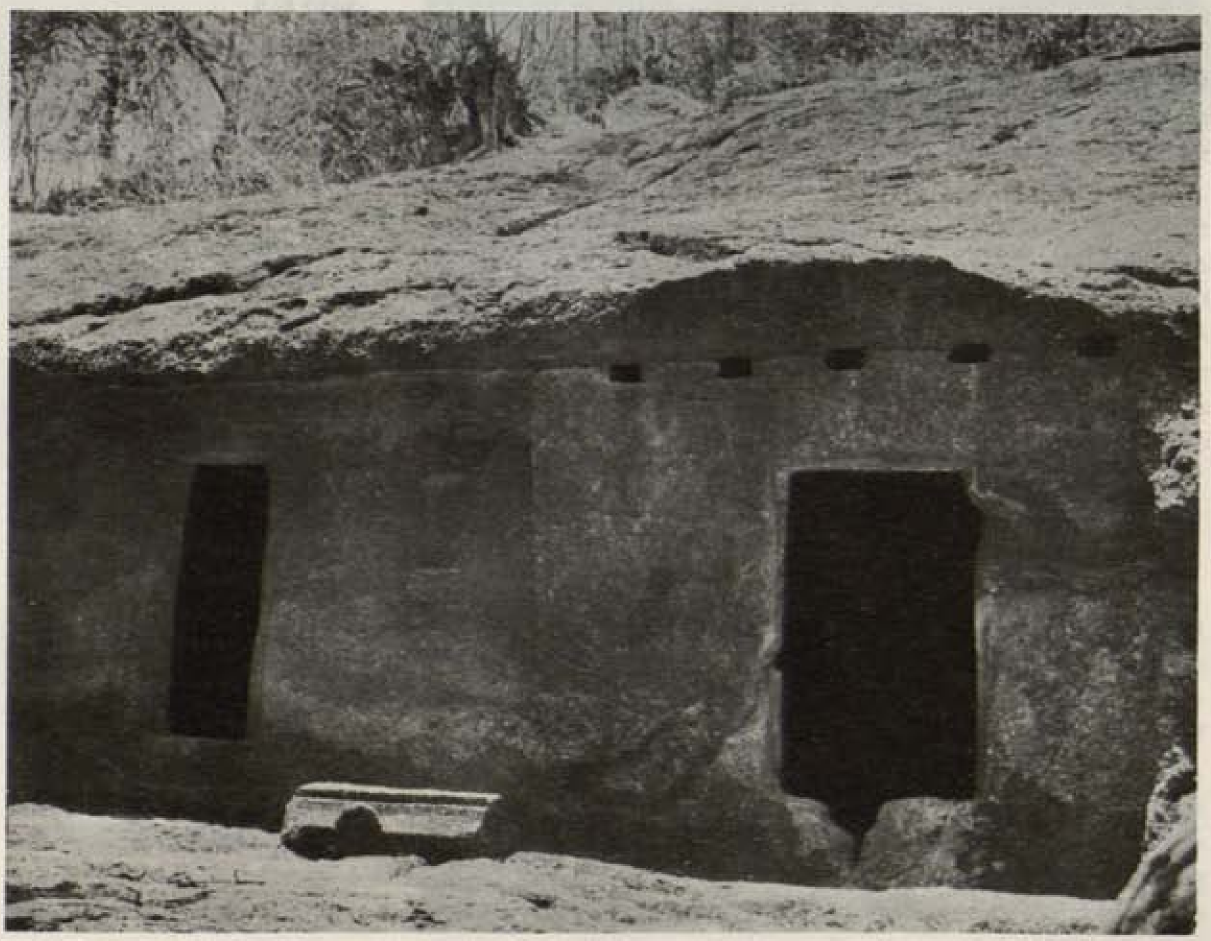
The heavy and broad parapet on which the rather massive octagonal pillars of cave 2 are

Plate 7. Indian Museum
Standing *manushi* Buddhas with Maitreya from West Bengal(Courtesy:–Indian Museum, Calcutta).



Plate 8. Panhale

Facade of caves 4 and 5.



carved,the astylar nature of the hall,the provision of rock-cut benches along the interior hall, the two cells within the hall meant for cult objects,and the existence of *manushi* Buddhas indicate that the cave was used at one time for Vajrayana worship.

The octagonal pillars over the parapet recall to our mind similar octagonal pillars at Kanheri (caves 32, 67) where the pillars are octagonal in section right up to the beam and have no capitals and the parapet is usually decorated on the exterior by *vedika* decoration. These can be attributed to 4th cent. A.D. and the Panhale cave 2 constitutes the development of a *vihara* into a large Aksobhya shrine attributable to *circa* 9th or 10th cent.A.D. In fact,cave6 at Panhale with slender octagonal pillars may be earlier than cave2 and almost coeval with Kanheri caves mentioned above.

As regards the *nagabandha* motif on the pillar capitals, it is felt that the original capitals were perhaps simple two armed brackets but were modified in the 10th cent. A.D. The niche for placing cult images, with rounded top, within a rectangular niche is also a late innovation ascribable to the 10th cent. A.D.

CAVE 3

Cave 3 is excavated within the eastern side wall of the courtyard of cave 2. It is a small cell measuring 2.35 m. x 2.48 m. and 1.80 m. high and meant to enshrine some cult image. In the back wall, there is a small semicircular niche set within a larger rectangular one. The inner niche has a mortise hole for placing the cult image. To the south of the central niche is another one with a rectangular top. It also has a mortise hole at the base for placing another cult image. In the southern wall there is a small niche for placing a lamp. Both the caves (2 and 3) were coated with lime plaster. traces of which are still visible.

This cave seems to be a later thought because it is of the nature of an extension of cave 2. The present cave 1 also appears to be a later addition . The original cave 1 may have faced cave 3 and thus the three caves were a single architectural unit[3].

CAVE 4

There is a common courtyard for caves 4 and 5.(Plate 8). Cave 4 has an entrance doorway measuring 1.43 m.x. 70 m. Corresponding to the plain *lalata-bimba*, the door sill also has a rectangular protrusion in the centre, prefaced by an *ardhachandrasila* with *shanka* appendage. There is no provision of holes for fixing the door frame, but on the inner side, there is a wider offset for fixing the door frame.

The cave is plain inside and measures 3.0 m.x 1.85m.In the back wall is a small niche with a semicircular top set within a larger rectangular niche. There is a mortise hole for fixing an image. Outside, to the west of the doorway, is small oblong niche with a mortise hole for fixing an image. There probably existed a wall in the courtyard, at the western end of the cave separating it from cave no. 5.

At the eastern end of the courtyard, there is a deep rectangular niche. In its rear part there is a pedestal with a mortise hole for keeping the image in position. Above the niche, at a little higher level, are carved the upper members of the *grivamalaka* with

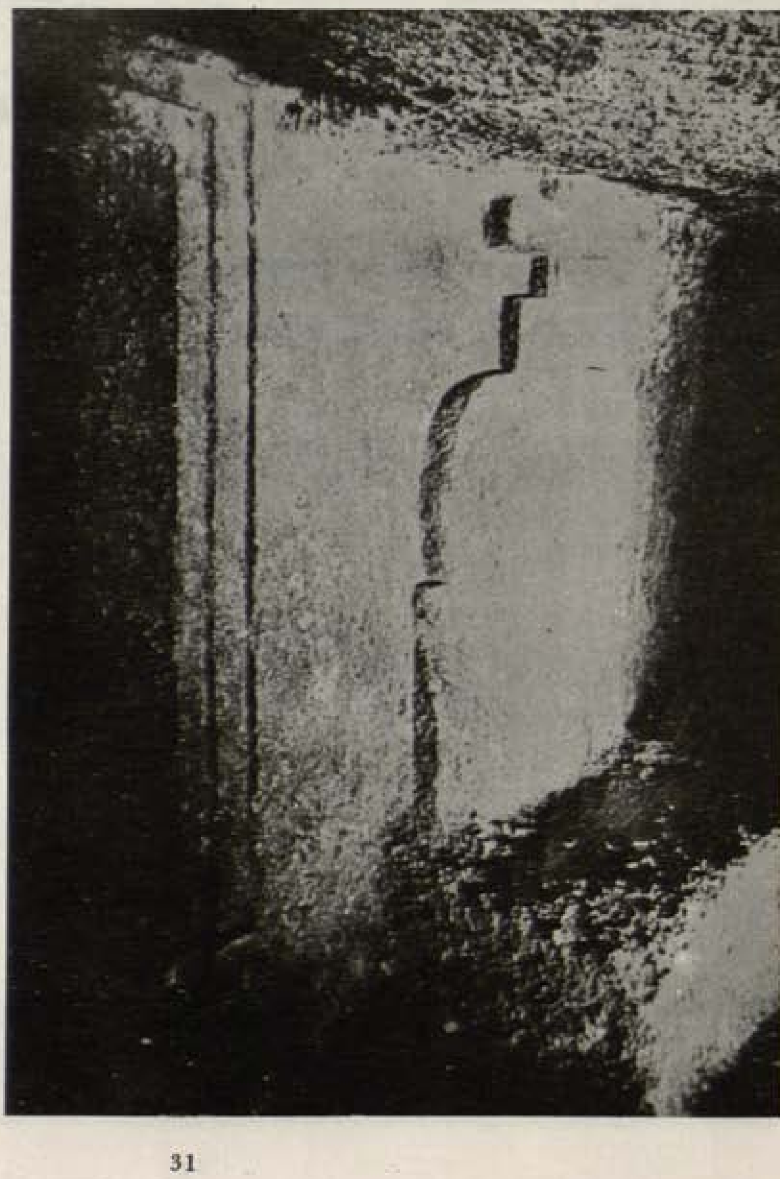
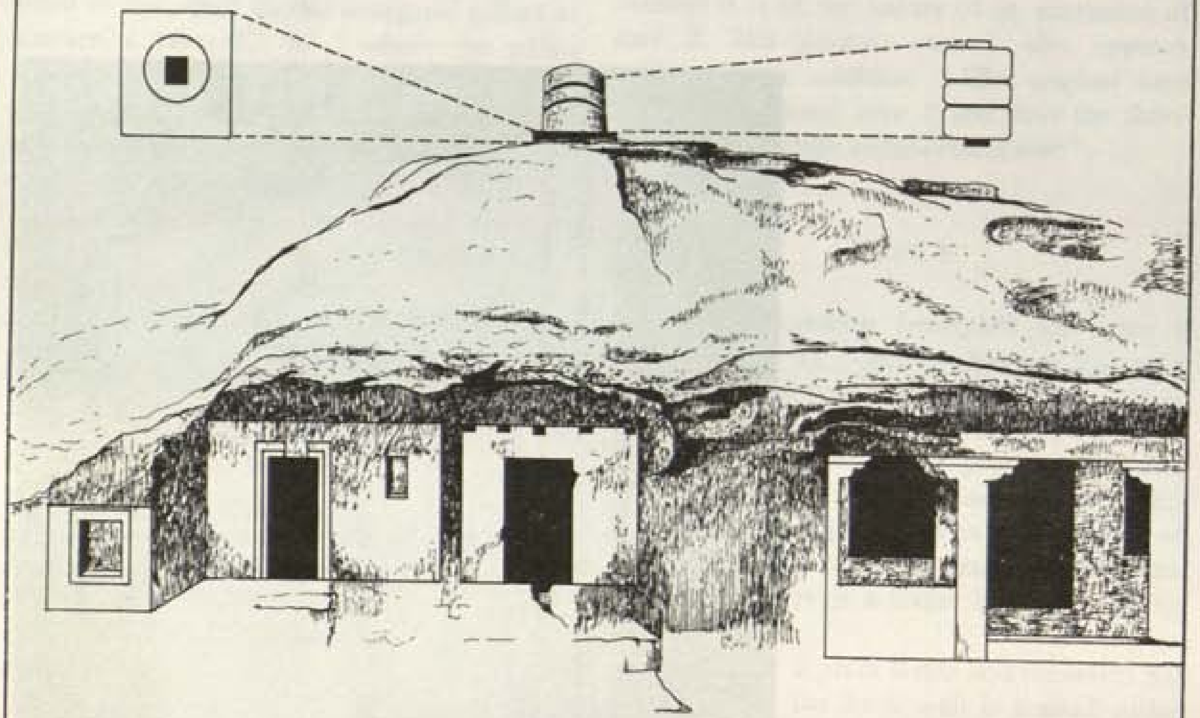


Plate 9. Panhale
Stupa in relief in cave 5, *circa* 3rd century A.D.



Panhale
Sketch of caves 4-6 showing the manner, in which a monolithic *stupa* was once placed on the top terrace of cave 6.

Plate 10. Panhale

Top terrace over caves 5 and 6 showing a rectangular mortise hole within a circular cutting for receiving tenon of the *stupa*.



kalasa at the top.

An Aksobhya image (Plate 65) was found amidst debris against the back wall of this cave. This fact was confirmed from the photograph taken by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Maharashtra during clearance work. It appears that this Aksobhya image was enshrined in the niche,at a later date, when the original *bhikku-griha* was transformed into an Aksobhya shrine.

CAVE 5

The cave is an interesting excavation. It has a simple rectangular door opening without any *dvara-sakha* and *lalata-bimba.* On the façade to the east, a rectangular portion (.55 m.x .65 m.) has been finely chiselled for engraving a inscription. The inscription was either not carved or if it was carved it was purposely chiselled out. Above the door is row of five sockets meant for wooden rafters, indicating that the cave had a covered verandah supported on wooden pillars. The courtyard floor also has holes for fixing the wooden uprights.

The cave originally consisted of a small astylar square hall (3.60 m. x 3.60 m.) with a bench running east-west and continuing at right angles along the southern face , but interrupted by the doorway of the inner shrine which perhaps is a later extension. This cave was also extended westward by a meter. The chisel marks in this extended portion are of a different type. The inner shrine mesures 2.66 m.x 2.30 m.

What is most important in this cave is the existence of a *stupa* in low relief (Plate 9) on the western side of the doorway above the bench level. May be, the *anda* portion of the *stupa* was chiselled and it now appears to be in low relief. It has a drum 50cms. in height and 80 cms. wide and a band for *vedika* (which is not carved), above which is the *anda* portion surmounted by a plain *harmika*,a short and faceted *yasti* and *chhatra* having lotus design at the top. On the corresponding side,i.e. to the east of the doorway, there is a rectangular niche with a raised border. It appears that the niche was carved later after obliterating the *stupa* which may have once existed here,corresponding to the one on the other side.There are three rock-cut holds in the ceiling opposite the *stupa* which may have been used for suspension of lamps, etc. It is quite likely that between the two *stupas,* in the centre of the cave(where the entrance doorway of the *garbha-griha* is provided),there was perhaps some other votice object.

The door of the *garbha-griha* has two plain *dvara-sakhas* and a plain *lalata-bimba.* Inside the cell there is a small platform carved against the back wall. The central portion of the back wall is also chiselled so as to remove all traces of a possible votive object, perhaps an image placed against the wall over the rock-cut platform. Within the *garbha-griha* there is a rectangular niche in the western wall above the floor of the cell. The inner cell was found to be leaking and a small rectangular storage pit was excavated in the floor and the overflow of water was let out of the cave by means of a channel cut across and passing through the door sill of the *garbha-griha* and the entrance door. The main entrance to the cave was provided with two sets of holes for fixing a crossbar from inside.

Above this cave almost over the *garbha-griha,* (on the top terrace) is a rock-cut rectangular *adhisthana* with a rectangular mortise 34 cms (N.S.), 32 cms (EW) and 19 cms deep,

Plate 11. Panhale

Top terrace over caves 5–6 showing masonry retaining wall and disturbed flooring slabs.



set within a circular socket (diameter 75 cms) and 10 cms deep. (Plate 10). Apparently this arrangement was meant for placing a separate votive *stupa* on the top of the cave. (fig.4 and 10). The measurements of the sockets correspond to the bottom tenon and diameter of a *stupa* presently lying in the courtyard. This *stupa* has a central recessed band, and is devoid of any other decoration.

The roof-top of cave no. 5 along with that of caves numbering 6, 7 and 8 have a common drainage system with a dry masonry retaining wall at the rear. (Plate 11) . The top portion of the roof is partly paved with dry masonry courses and the retaining wall has four receding cou.ses. Beyond the retaining wall was exposed, as a result of excavation, a drain and some masonry work meant for channelling the water over the roof through a concealed rock-cut drain. It is likely that out of the four remaining cylindrical *stupa*[4] which now lie in front of this cave, some may have been placed on the top of the cave over the masonry platform, the displaced masonry having been washed away and the arrangement for placing the *stupas* in position is now not traceable. However, it is also possible that they were placed in the courtyard. The largest *stupa* among the four lying opposite the cave, it appears , was placed in the courtyard of cave 6 like the one in front of cave 12.

It becomes clear that the three caves 4, 5 and 6) were begun around the 3rd cent. A.D., and continued to be in use upto 10-11th cent. A.D. At each successive period additions were made or original features obliterated to provide for the changing pattern of worship.

It may also be observed that from the courtyard of cave nos. 7, 8 and 9, rock-cut flights of steps, were provided, one on the east and the other on the west, leading to the roof to facilitate worship of the *stupas* placed over roof.

Observations on Caves 4 & 5

Caves 4 and 5 , the latter containing remains of a rock-cut *stupa* in relief on the wall, suggest that they were originally *bhikshu grihas* of the Hinayana period and formed the earliest core of excavation activity at the site. The *stupa* in cave 5 is comparable with a similar *stupa* in relief at Chaul which also has lotus decoration over the *chhatra* and is dateable to c. 3rd cent. A.D. This goes to indicate the existence of early Hinayana activity at Panhale, around 3rd cent. A.D. the caves at Chiplun, however, are earlier, the *stupa* at that place can be ascribed to *circa* 2nd cent. A.D.

In front of cave 4 lies an ornamental portion of a doorway with figure sculpture consisting of elegently carved male and female figures of slender profile. In their present abraded condition it is not possible to identify them. But the inner most figure could be a river goddess. The central portion of the *dwarasakha* contains images which are also worn out. The sculpture would belong to 10 cent. A.D. It is reported to have been brought here from a Siva temple in the limits of Nile Wadi and does not belong to the cave.

CAVE 6

This cave in its present form has a courtyard lower than the common courtyard of caves 4 and 5 (Plate 12). The cave has characteristics common to cave 2 in so far as its front elevation is concerned . It has

Plate 12. Panhale
Façade of cave 6.



Plate 13. Panhale
Door-sill of cave 6
showing lozenge-shaped
decoration in the centre.





Plate 14. Panhale
Stupa which may have stood opposite the entrance of cave 6

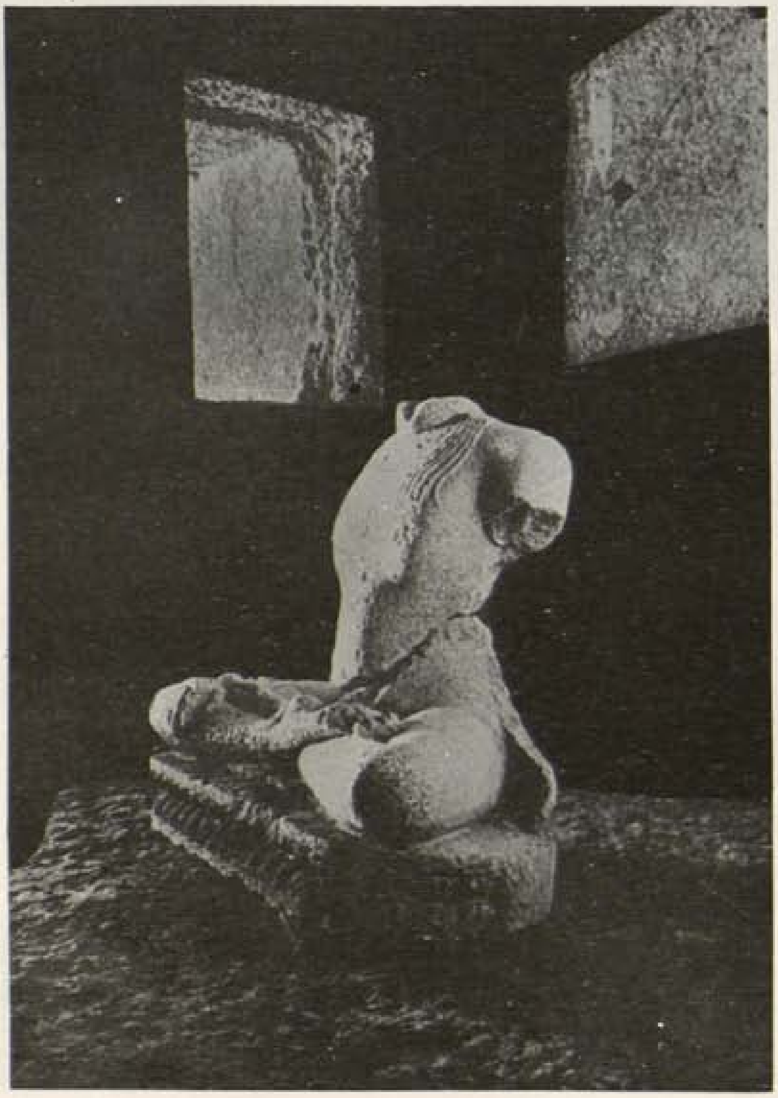


Plate 15. Panhale

Image of Akshobhya which was in worship in cave 6.

two octagonal pillars and two pilasters resting on the parapet wall.The pillars have brackets with the volute kept in position by a *nagabandha,* the only addition being that on the lower side, there is a curved leaf like projection joining with the *naga-hood.* In the verandah, there is a bench on the either side, the one on the east having a head-rest. In the eastern wall is a rectangular niche with another smaller niche with a semicircular top set within it.

Leading into the interior hall from the verandah is a door-way with two plain *sakas* and a plain *lalata-bimba.* The *sakas* are not carried all through. For the first time we get floral lozenge shaped decoration on the door sill. This is repeated on the large cylindrical *stupa* which is seen lying in the courtyard. On the four sides of the upper part (*anda*) ,the *stupa* has similar lozenge shaped decoration and it appears that it was placed in front of this cave, at a time when this Hinayana cave was appropriated for Vajrayana worship (Plates. 13&14). The door-way is flanked by two windows with a socket carved within the thickness of the wall for insertion of either a stone or wooden grill.

The interior hall (6.35 m x 5.95 m) has a bench running along the wall but it is so modified as to form a flight of two steps in the front of the *garbha-griha* which is right opposite to the main entrance. In the *garbha-griha* (2.80 m. x 3.00 m.) there is a low pedestal with two offsets at the two front corners almost making it *pancha-ratha* on plain.Within the *garbha-griha,* on the ceiling there is a rock-cut hold for suspension of a lamp made by scooping the rock from either side. There is a diagonal crack in the ceiling from which water oozed out and this was led outside the cave by a rock-cut channel. Behind the pedestal above the platform, there are two vertical sockets meant probably for fixing the *prabhavali* of the image. There is no sculpture in position. However, in the hall lies a broken and headless figure of Akshobhya in *padmasana* in *bhumisparasha mudra,* on a double lotus seat, in the centre of which is carved a *vajra* in horizontal positon.(Pl15). Aksobhya has his left shoulder covered with drapery which is indicated on the left part of the chest as well as on the pedestal below his feet.The presence of the image suggests that this cave was a shrine meant for enshrining the image of Aksobhya, one of the *dhyani* Buddhas of the Vajrayana pantheon.

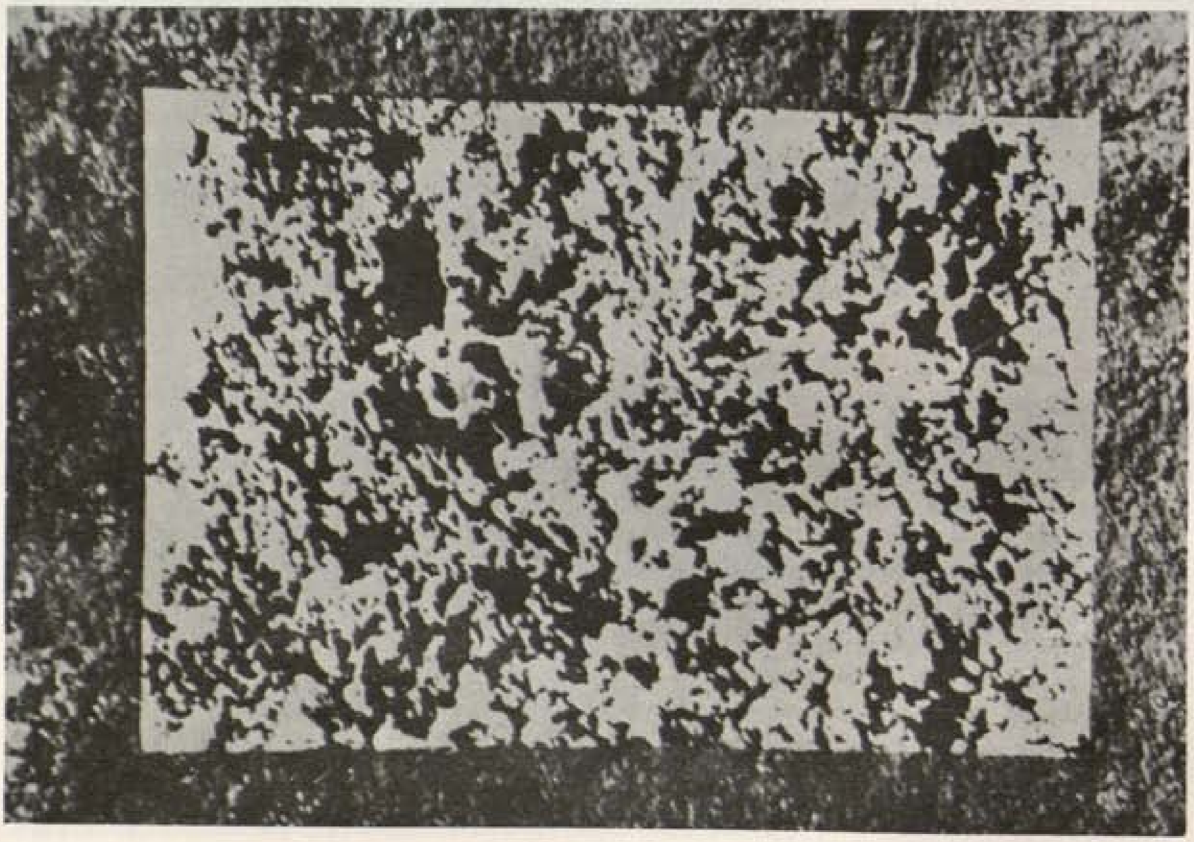
In the hall, on the right side of the back wall, is a cell (2.45 x 1.98m) which is provided with a bench at the rear having a rock-cut head-rest. Similarly there is a cell in the eastern wall (2.10 m x 1.98 m) which is provided with a bench on the southern side. In the ceiling of the hall are scooped out two holes for suspending lamps or bells. On the eastern wall are few rectangular sockets so disposed as to form a semicircle. It is likely that a loose image was kept on the bench and the sockets used for fixing a decorative wooden arch.

So far as the *nagabandha* capitals of the octagonal. pillars are concerned, it is evident that they were carved not earlier than c. 10th century A.D. Obviously the only surmise that can be drawn is that the pillars originally had two armed rectangular capitals which were remodelled to conform to the 10th century pattern.

In the jain caves at Ankai, not only do we get the capital with *nagabandha* motif but also the perforated screen work of which a good example exists in cave 16 at Panhale. The Ankai caves are attributed to the 10th

Plate 16. Panhale

Remains of an abraded *brahmi* inscription in the verandah of cave 6. The few identifiable letters suggest its date as *circa* 3rd century A.D.



cent. A.D.

The clue to the earlier dating of this cave and its attribution to the Hinayana phase is provided by its architectural components: These consist of a large hall with two cells for monks as pointed out above in addition to the *garbha-griha* which originally may have been also a *bhikshu-griha.* Further it retains, on the western portion of the verandah wall, above the niche, a few letters of a purposely obliterated inscription. Among these, letters *sa* and *ma,* can be deciphered clearly and can be attributed to circa 3rd cent. A.D. on palaeographic grounds (*vide* Pl. 16). This Hinayana *vihara,* placed side by side with cave 5, a *caitya-griha,* was later converted into a shrine of Aksobhya.

CAVES 7 & 7A

These two caves are disposed one over the other, 7A, being at a lower level and exposed recently (Plate 17). Cave 7, is accessible by a flight of steps along its western edge which also provides access to the cave top. The cave can also be approached from the court of cave 8.

The lower cave, 7A, is not only incomplete but very much damaged. There is a very rough sculpture of a male *dvarapala* with an attendant on the eastern side of the door, which is not centrally located. Inside, the cave is roughly hewn and there is a broad bench at the back, a step at the lower level and a niche in the western wall.

Outside in the court-yard of this cave there are rock-cut steps leading to the remains or a partly rock-cut and partly structural shrine on the western side. However, except for the door sill, and a damaged *Sivalinga,* the shrine is missing. Perhaps cave 7A and the adjoining shrine belong to the later brahmanical phase of rock-cut-*cum* structural activity at the site.

Cave 7 has a small rock-cut court with a bench to its east. The cave has a projecting eaves which are partially missing over the doorway and on the eastern side. The cave once had a covered verandah as indicated by the rock-cut post-holes. A small entrance with two plain *dvarasakhas* and a *lalata-bimba* lead one to the inner hall. On the door step is carved the *chandrasila* in relief. There is also a floral lozenge on the either side of the central rectangular block.

Inside, the cell has a rock-cut bed with a sloping head rest, on the western side. In the back wall is a niche set within a larger rectangular niche. The inner niche has a cusped arch. The walls of the cave were plastered with lime at one time, of which traces are still seen. It is likely that the niche originally contained an image of Aksobhya in *bhumisparsa mudra.*

This cave appears to belong originally to the Hinayana phase and was a *bhikshu-griha* with a rock-cut bed. Later, it was appropriated for *tantric* Vajrayana worship when its entrance doorway was ornamented with *chandrasila* together with the floral lozenge decoration. The niche for the shrine was also added thus converting it into an Aksobhya shrine.

CAVE 8

Caves 7, 8 and 9 (Plate 17) have a common courtyard , partly rock-cut and partly provided with paving slabs in front of cave 8, some of which are, however, missing. The cave has broad steps and a plain doorway with two *dvara-sakhas* and a plain *lalata-*

Plate 17. Panhale

View of caves 7, 8 and 9. (Note the steps leading to the top terrace of the caves).





Plate 18. Panhale

Lower portion of the image of Aksobhya in the *garbha-griha*, in cave 8, *circa*, 10th century A.D.

bimba. The central protrusion on the door sill is, however decorated with a floral lozenge. The cave had projecting rock-cut eaves. The courtyard was once covered with temporary timber roofing as indicated by the post-holes on the floor.

Inside the cave, which is excavated rather deep, there is a crescent-shaped step attached to the doorway. The cave has a broad platform along its rear wall, beyond which is carved a rectangular niche with another set within it. On the rock-cut *pitha* is set a loose image of Akshobhya in *bhumisparsa mudra* but it is broken above the waist, and the upper portion is missing (Plate 18). On the pedestal, in the centre, the distinguishing symbol of Aksobhya, namely *vajra* is carved horizontally. The cave was apparently dedicated to Aksobhya.

The cave was plastered with lime and there are indications that it was plastered twice during its occupation. At present, the plaster is seen only in the corners.

This cave, like cave no. 7 must have been excavated in the Hinayana phase but was later altered and added to so as to transform it into an Aksobhya shrine.

CAVE 9

This cave is a small excavation and has a door-step decorated with *chandrasila,* a rather low door frame with plain *dvara-sakhas* and a plain *lalata-bimba.* There is a rectangular step inside the door enabling the visitor to enter the cave. The height inside is hardly 2 meters. There is a rock-cut bench along the eastern side and a rectangular niche at a higher level with another niche set within it and having a socket at the base. The inner niche is roughly hewn forming an arch at the top. Some traces of lime plaster are still visible.

On the western periphery of this cave, rock-cut steps have been provided for going over to the top of cave 10 and by its side there is a rock-cut drain, the water from which was carried further away from the court through a masonry channel which is covered over by large inter-locking slabs.

This cave, like the previous one, appears to be originally a *bhikshu-griha* of the Hinayana phase transformed into a shrine during the *tantric* Vajrayana occupation of the site.

CAVE 10

Caves 10 and 11 (*vide* Pl. 10) have a common courtyard but the projecting eaves of cave 11 are at a slightly higher level than those of cave 10. Cave 10, measuring 4.95 m. x 4.85 m. and 2.7 m. in height, is entered through a doorway, the front portion of which was once decorated with *ardhacandrasila* carving. The door-frame has three *sakhas* and a plain *lalata-bimba.* The *sakhas* however, have been re-cut along its upper half so as to form re-entrant angles. This cave is very important for it contains the image of Mahacandarosana, in stone, rarely to be met with in Indian Buddhist monuments except at Ratnagiri Pl. 21.

The cave is commodious and has a rock-cut bench, 75 cms. broad, along its western wall and provided with a head-rest. In the back wall is carved a large and deep niche measuring 1.60 m x 1.3 m. It has again an inner niche (1.48 m x 79 m.) having a slightly rounded top. In the niche there is a loose *adhisthana* bearing elephant and lion figures on its central re-entrant surfaces. Over this is a beautiful and nearly complete two-armed

Plate 19. Panhale
View of caves 9, 10 and 11





Plate 20. Panhale
Mahacandarosana in Cave 10.



Plate 21. Ratnagiri Mahavihara (Orissa)
Mahacandarosana on a *stupa* (courtesy :— Archaeological Survey of India)

image of Mahacandarosana (height 97 cm. width 65 cm)having an oval halo around its head (*vide* Pl. 20) . Its right leg is flexed with the knee resting on the floor in a militant posture (*pratyalidha*) The right hand broken from the elbow holds a sword (*khadga*) which is seen behind the *karanda-mukuta*. The left hand holds a noose (*pasa*). It wears *tatankacakra* in the ears, a long *mala* running over the legs and a shorter one flowing down the chest. In addition, there is a broad ornament over the chest attached to the *ekavali*. The garland is beautifully disposed with its angular frill shown dextrously. on the back slab. There is a frightening grin on the face and eyes appear to be bulging out. Below the *mukuta*, the curly locks of hair are visible. He has *keyuras* on the arms and anklets on the feet.

There is an attendant in *anjali-mudra*, seated to the right of the image. The sculpture would belong to c. 10 th century A.D. and can be attributed to the late Chalukyan school. On the top of the semi-circular slab there is a crudely carved figure of Aksobhya in *bhumisparsha-mudra*. It is flush with the surface. The carving however is inferior in quality and is probably carved later by a local artist to fulfill iconographic requirements.

One important point to note is the carving of two *padukas* on the pedestal close to the niche containing the cult image. The cave was once plastered with a thick lime coat.

There are two niches with semicircular tops, one each in the eastern and the western wall. Both have sockets for inserting loose images therein.

CAVE 11

It has a plain doorway with two plain *dvara-sakhas*. There is a plain *lalata-bimba* over the door-frame.The re-entrant angle of the *dvara-sakhas* are continued up to the sill level and are further carved on the sill. There are two niches with semi-circular top, one each, on either side of the doorway. There is also a rectangular socket along the back wall of the courtyard on a raised platform just below the niche. One wonders whether it was meant as a post hole, the post top being used for placing offerings.

The inner hall (4.00 m. x 3.50 m.) has a bench running along its eastern wall with a rock-cut head-rest at the end.Like the niche in the preceding cave, there is a niche within the niche for the central deity with a step in front. On either side of this niche are two smaller niches for subsidiary images. There is also one more niche on the eastern wall. There is no image in any of the niches. The cave walls retain lime plasters at many places.

CAVE 12

Cave No. 12 is an impressive large excavation with a broad rock-cut courtyard, in the centre of which stands a tall cylindrical *stupa* over a low *adhisthana*. (Plate 22). This *stupa* has a cylindrical drum embellished by two roundish mouldings dividing the drum of the *stupa* in 3 parts. Over the second moulding rises the superimposed stem of *harmika*. The façade of this cave is similar to that of cave no. 2 and cave no. 6. It has two octagonal pillars and pilasters on a broad parapet but having square bases, unlike those in no. 2 and 6. However, they have voluted

Plate 22. Panhale

View of cave 12 with a *stupa* in the courtyard opposite the entrance.





Plate 23. Panhale
Entrance of cave 12 showing pillars on the parapet.



Plate 24. Panhale
Pillars with the *naga-bandha* capitals, cave 12.

Plate 25. Panhale

Interior of the verandah of cave 12 showing entrance doors to three cells.



brackets with stylized *nagabandha* the cobra hood touching an arched adjunct on the underside of the bracket. (Plates 23 & 24) These pillars carry a heavy rock-cut beam with the eaves projecting over it.

The front two pillars are 3.20 m. apart providing a very wide entrance to the verandah which is 2.90 m. deep and 9.28 m. wide. At either end of the verandah there is a rock-cut bed with a head-rest.

In the back wall of the verandah there is a central shrine flanked by a cell on either side for the residence of *bhikshus* (Pl. 25), both provided with a bench but not containing any niche for keeping the cult object. The side cells are also not provided with a step, although they are 60 cms. above the floor level.

The central shrine, however, has a step, a plain door frame with two *sakhas* and no figure sculpture on the *lalata-bimba.*

Inside the shrine there is a low bench running on all sides, with the corners near the entrance doorway, chamfered off. In the back -wall, on a high pedestal, is cut a deep semi-circular niche for accommodating the cult-image which is now missing. It may have contained the usual figure of Aksobhya in *bhumisparsha mudra.* In the absence of the mortise for the image one may conclude that the image rested on a loose *adhisthana* slab.

It appears that the cave was leaking and attempts were made in the past to plug the holes with loose stones, three of which are still seen in the ceiling fixed in the cavities. However, to drain out the water which dripped in the cave, a drain was cut through the door-sill and the water let out of the cave. Another drain issuing from the eastern cell was connected to the main drain and the accumulated water was let out in the court.

Originally, this may have been a large *vihara* with three cells, but later it was appropriated for *tantric* Vajrayana worship in *circa* 10th cent. A.D. when the pillar capitals underwent a change, the plain two armed capitals being decorated with volutes and *nagabandha* and the central cell transformed into an Aksobhya shrine.

CAVE 13

Cave 13 lies at the farthest end of this second group of excavation. It has a wide courtyard with a sloping partition wall all along its western end which also has rock-cut bench adjacent to it. The cave has a plain door with double *dvarasakhas* and a plain *lalata-bimba.* Inside the hall (4.23 m x 3.86 m) there is a bench on the western side. In a part of its western wall, opposite the entrance is a semi-circular niche, placed within a larger rectangular one having an inset border. This cave appears to have been added during the Vajrayana occupation as an adjunct to cave12. There are traces of old lime plaster in this cave.

CAVE 14

About 30 m. away from cave 13 is located cave no. 14, the first distinguishing feature of which is that its doorway has a *lalata-bimba* with the carving of Ganesha flush with the surface, thereby suggesting its brahmanical affiliation. However, its use for brahmanical worship appears to be an adaptation of an earlier Vajrayana cave. The cave has a raised open courtyard with broad benches on either side, the one on the eastern side has

Plate 26. Panhale

Padukas on a loose pedestal in the courtyard of cave14.

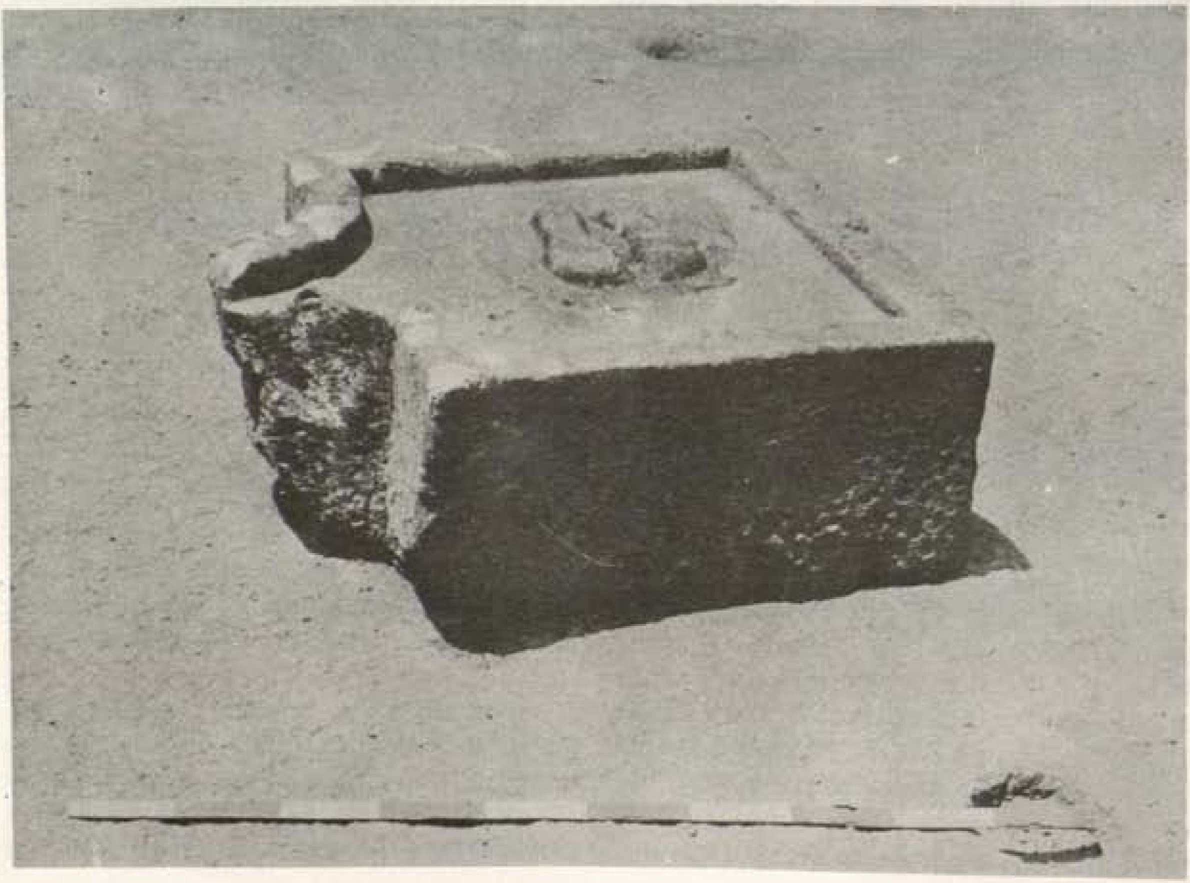


Plate 27. Panhale

Forecourt and façade of cave 14.

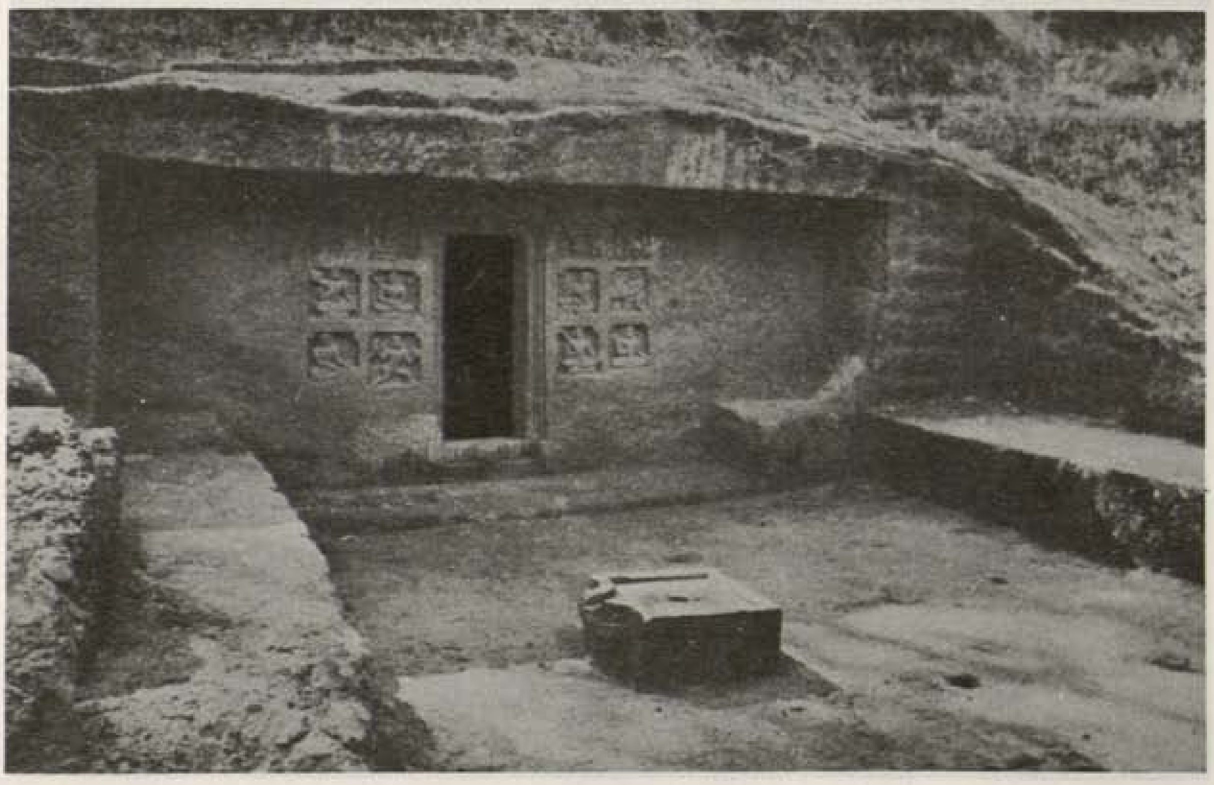
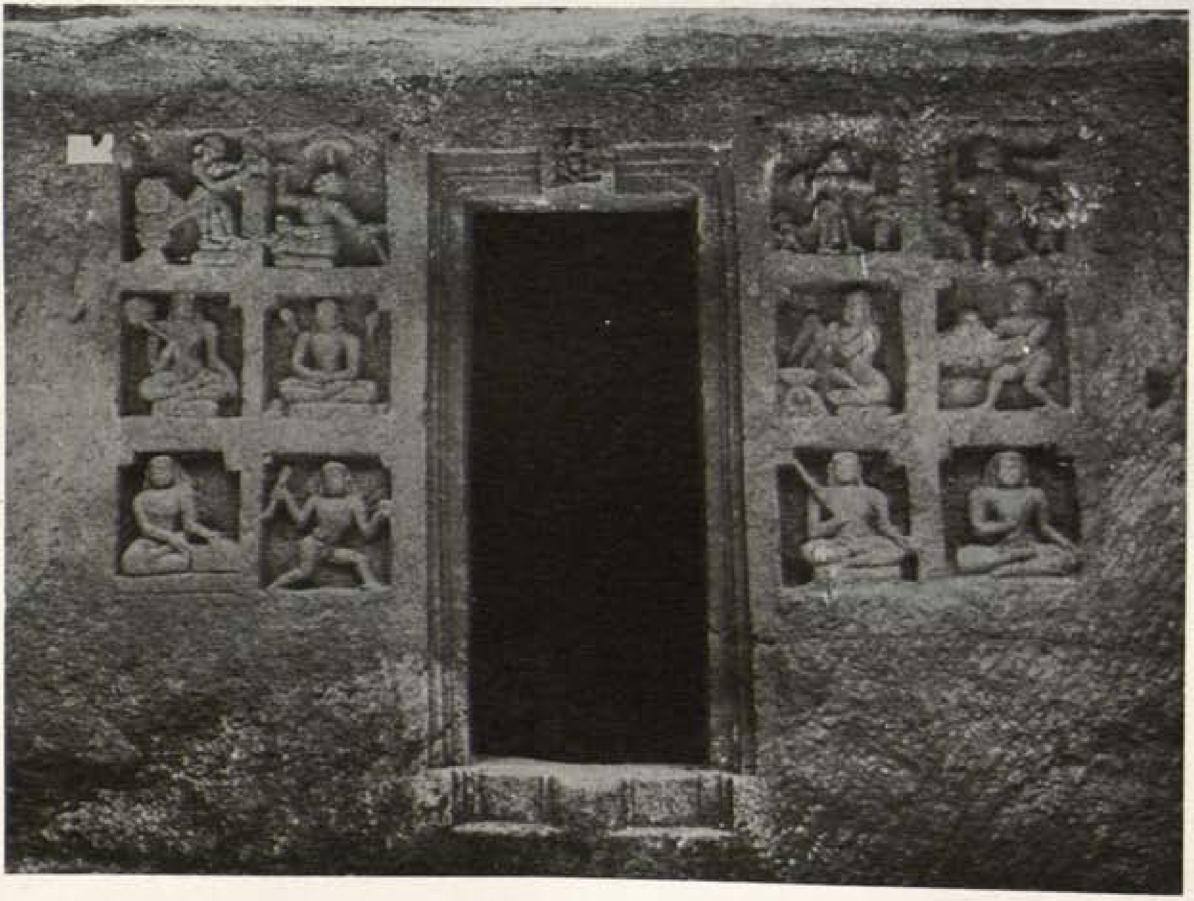


Plate 28. Panhale

Entrance door-way with sculptured panels of Natha *siddhas* cave 14 *circa*.13th cent. A.D.



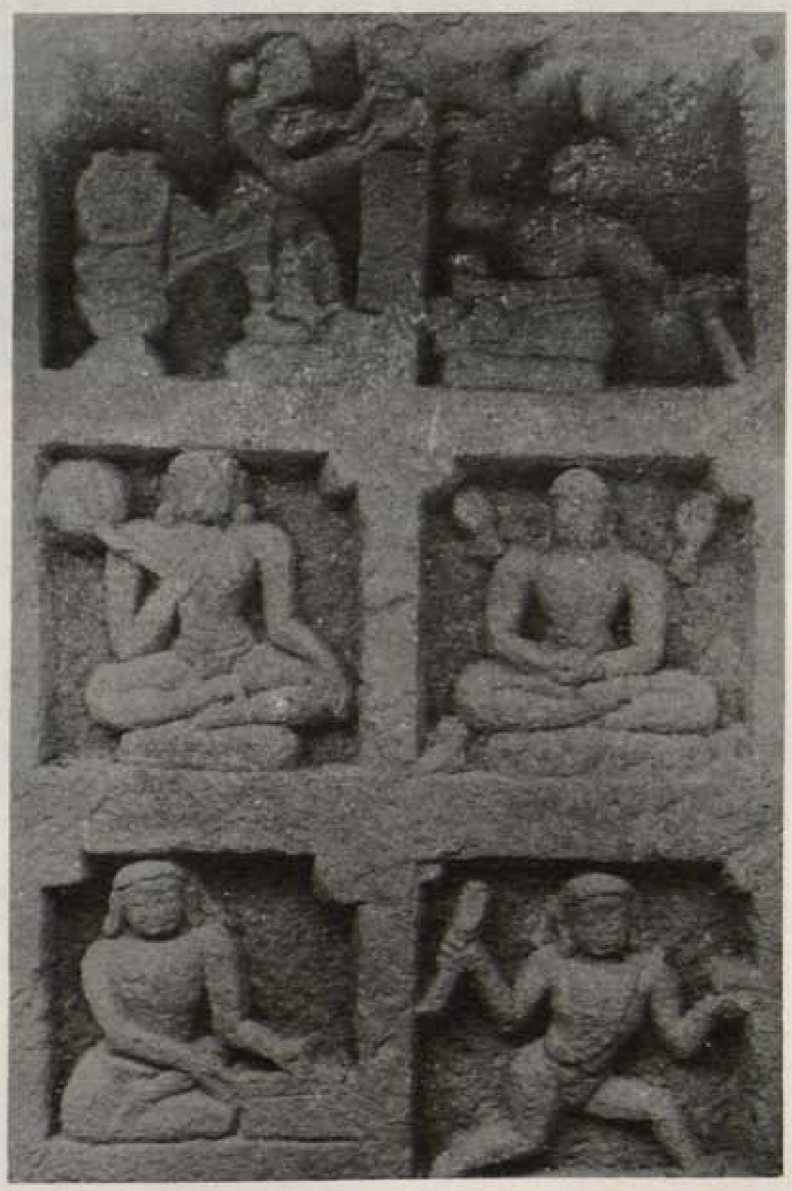


Plate 29. Panhale

Nath *siddha* panels on the left (eastern) side of cave 14.

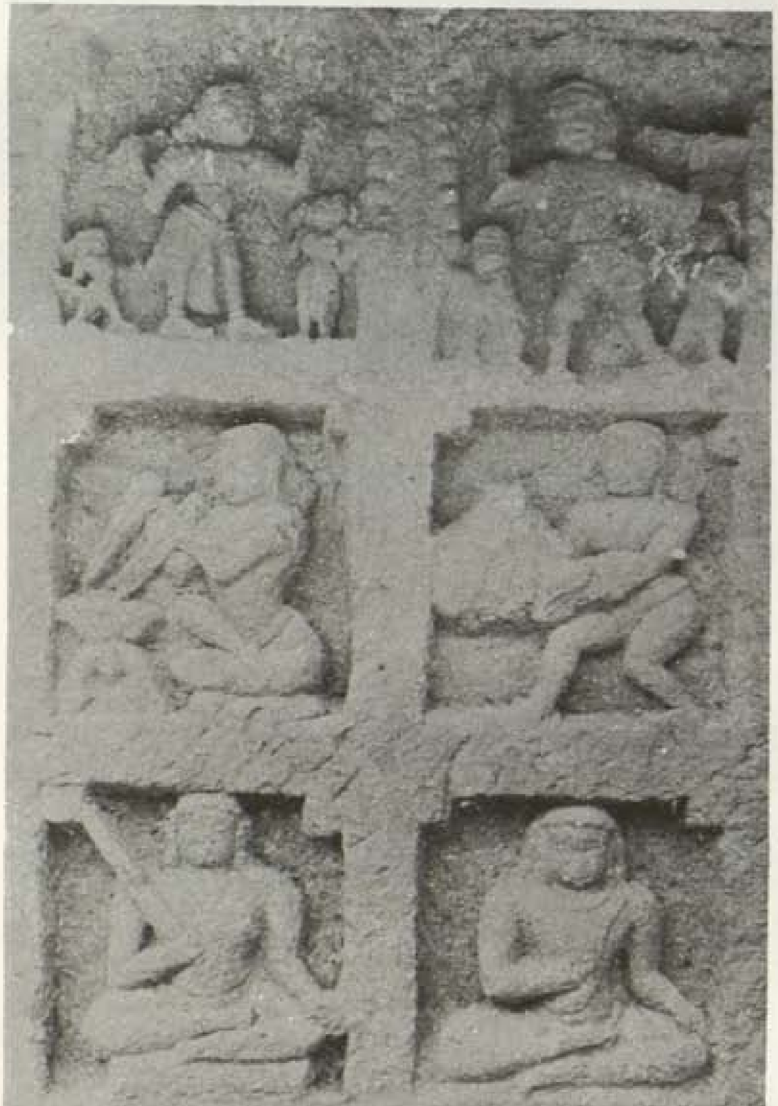


Plate 30. Panhale
Natha *siddha* panels on the right(western side of)cave 14.

been provided with another stepped platform at a slightly higher level. The courtyard has post-holes at regular intervals along the benches and on the northern side, suggesting the existence of a wooden pillared portico. In this portico is found sculptured a *vedi* in the centre of which, on a rounded base, are carved *padukas* in relief(Pls 26-7),an earlier instance being in cave 10 where the *padukas* were carved on the step close to the principal niche enshrining the image of Mahacandarosana.

Coming to the entrance of the cave, one is stuck by its sculpured façade. (Plates 27–30). On either side of the entrance doorway are six rectangular panels, two in each row,each approximately 35cms. sq and demarcated by pilasters. The panels are sunk, and flush with the surface of the wall and therefore appear to be a later thought.

The panel of the eastern side (Pl. 29) are as follows:

In the top register there is a standing figure of a lady holding a *kamandalu* and facing an ascetic who is shown seated in the adjoining panel. Behind the female figure are placed two pots on a bi-conical stand and her flowing garment touches the pots,while its folds also fall between her legs. She wears heavy anklets and a necklace and her head is turned towards the ascetic in the next panel. Above the pilaster is carved the crescent shaped moon, and below it on the pilaster the round orb of the sun in relief. The ascetic is seated in a squatting posture in *ardha-matsyendrasana* on a raised seat with a *yoga-pattavali* tied over the legs. His right hand is raised above pointing towards the sun. His neck is tilted as if looking towards the lady. He is shown seated under a *chattra* with his left hand resting on the arm-rest He wears wristlets.

In the second register consisting of two panels, are carved two sculptures in frontal pose. The one on the east holds in his right hand a staff, perhaps a fly whisk. His left hand is placed on the knee. He is seated in *sukhasana* with his right leg resting on the left leg over a raised seat. He wears a loin-cloth. In the adjacent panel is a crudely cut figure of an ascetic seated in *padmasana* with hands in *dhyana-mudra*. Above his shoulders on either side are shown two detached hands. Similarly, there is also the representation of two detached legs,one on either side of his seat,corresponding to the hands shown above. This subject depicts Chouranginath whose hands and feet were severed by his step mother but were later restored by Matsyendranath. He wears an *ekavali* and upper garment, folds of which are seen across his left shoulder and the waist.

Of the lower two panels,the eastern one shows an ascetic seated in a squatting posture in the act of removing the lid of a box with his two hands. In the adjacent panel is shown a figure walking briskly with his left leg forward holding a bowl in his left hand and a club in his right hand. He wears a loin-cloth and an *uttariya* is placed accross his left shoulder and the waist. He has his hair falling on either side. His ear ornaments are not clearly depicted.

On the western side(Pl.30),in the upper two panels, there is a female figure with a girl and a boy in one panel and facing a male figure with two attendant figures in the adjoining panel. The pilaster in between them has been carved in the form of a tree. The male figure holds some indeterminate object in his right hand while in his left hand he holds a staff topped by a *trisula*. The two

attendants are disposed, one in the front and the other in the rear. The garment worn by the ascetic across his right shoulder and waist is clearly discernible. He wears heavy armlets, wristlets and also anklets. He also wears a short *dhoti.* There is a *chhatra* over the head of the ascetic and a *damaru* can be recognised along-side.

The second panel shows in each compartment one male figure. The one near the door-jamb is shown squatting on a small seat. In front of him, over a tripod is a bowl and with the hand he holds two pincers suggesting probably an ascetic involved in alchemy. In the adjoining panel is shown an ascetic marching towards him with an indeterminate object which is not fully carved. He wears a loin cloth, and his large pierced ear-lobes almost reach his shoulder.

In the lower register are two ascetics in frontal pose. The one near the door-jamb holds a staff in his left hand that rests on his left knee and what he holds is not clear. He is seated with his right leg over his left leg on a raised seat in *sukhasana.* The adjoining panel shows an ascetic in *vyakhyana-mudra* with his left hand resting on the knee. He is also seated in *sukhasana* but without a seat.

The door frame has two *sakhas* but there is an angular string course along the inner *sakha.* Corresponding to the *lalata-bimba,* the door sill has a semicircular protrusion without any carving. On the raised low platform running along the door frame there is no representation of *chandrasila* which was usually found in the preceding caves which appears to be a feature associated with the later phase of the Vajrayana caves.

The floor inside the cave is deep and there is a landing step on the inner side of the doorway. Immediately adjoining it is a rectangular pit, perhaps for accumulation of excess water that overflowed the rock-cut drain provided against the eastern wall. There is a rock-cut bench running all along the east, west and south sides. Behind this rock-cut bench in the back wall is a deep central niche that has been cut further and provided with a raised platform having in it a depression for installing some deity. What image was installed in this cave cannot be readily inferred, but, the tell-tale indications are provided by the sculptured panels on either side in the upper part of the niche and also on its side wall-surfaces. On the eastern side, the panels are placed in two compartments, the one closer to the eastern wall shows an ascetic with his right hand in *vyakhyana-mudra* and the left hand addressing a lady seated on a raised pedestal in *anjali-mudra.* This can be identified with *Adinatha* and *Girija.* (Plate 31). The next panel shows an ascetic seated on fish in a couchant manner with a *yogapatta* tied around his knees. This represents Matsyendranatha. Similar representation is found depicted, on a larger scale, in the Gaur Lena cave 29, to the south end of the hill. On the western side of the back hall there is a frontal representation of a *Kanphata yogi* (a typical feature of Natha *sampradayi* yogis). He sports a beard. He is seated in *padmasana* with his left hand above his soles and the right hand in *vyakhyana-mudra.* To his left is a lady seated in *savya-latitasana* on a raised seat in *anjali-mudra.* In between them, on a raised *vedi* there are representations of what looks like a *homa-kunda.* The lady wears a *graiveyaka, stanahara* and has a round *dhamilla*-like hair style(Pl.31).On the western side wall of the niche there is a small panel showing a male in *Savyalalitasana* in *vyakhyana-mudra* with a female seated on his left lap,putting her rig-

Plate 31. Panhale

Interior of cave 14 showing Adinatha and Girija and Siva-Parvati on the side wall.



ht arm over the right shoulder of the male,in the *ardhalingana* pose.Her left leg is flexed at the knees on which rests her left elbow.She has turned her face towards the male thus showing her round ear-ornaments and the hair knot. The male figure also clasps her from behind. The male wears a *dhoti* and an upper garment. On his chest he sports a broad band of cloth in *yajnopavita* fashion. The lady wears *stanahara* and a lower garment the folds of which are seen on her thigh. This is perhaps a representation of Shiva-Parvati though the typical cognizances are absent. On the opposite wall in shown a yogi, crudely cut seated in *Sukhanasan* in and *dhyana-mudra* on a pedestal, wearing an *uttariya* across his right shoulder and reaching up to the waist. All these small panels with Natha subjects suggest that the cave may have contained the image of Gorakhnath with the smaller panels showing his Guru *Matsyendranath*. One headless image(*see* chapter 5,Pl.76) recovered from the cave precincts answers to the description of Gorakhnath, with the cows carved on the pedestal. The shrine was therefore dedicated to Gorakhnath (Goraksanath). The *padukas* placed outside in the courtyard may have been meant to be those of Matsyendranath, the spiritual teacher of Goraknath.

Reverting back to the cave proper it will be seen that along the broad bench on the western side there are rock-cut rectangular depressions corresponding to the holes in the ceiling, suggesting a wooden partition not usually found in any other cave.

There are also three rock-cut holds for suspension of a lamp, bell or curtain.

This cave like some others, was provided with arrangement for fixing wooden door frames with a locking arrangement from inside. This was of the nature of inserting a vertical wooden rod fitted into inner floor. In addition,there is an arrangement for fixing a cross-bar *(aragala)*.

POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION OF THE FOUR PANELS IN THE UPPER REGISTER TWO EACH ON THE EASTERN AND WESTERN SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE.

These four panels, perhaps interpret the very popular episode connected with Gopichanda and Mainamati intimately associated Nath mythology.

Mainamati according to one tradition, was initiated by Jalandharnath along with her brother Bhatruhari. Later, she was married to Manikchandra, the king of Bengal. She had a son called Gopichandra and a daughter by name Chandravati. After Manikchand's death Gopichandra succeeded his father to the throne. But Mainamati urged him to give up the life of pleasure and to be a follower of Jalandharnatha, who was at that time in the capital. Gopichand was initiated and went to Kadalivana. Chandravati also became a *yogini*. It is likely that the first two panels represent this popular episode.

In the other two panels, Mainamati is probably leading her son and daughter for initiation by Jalandharnath. Jalandharnath who is said to be according to one tradition the disciple of Siva himself and a follower of the Kapalika sect is depicted in the panel with a *trishula* in his right hand and, a *damaru* is seen above his head. This may therefore be a representation of Jalandharnath along with his two disciples and to whom Mainamati is approaching.

CAVE 15

Cave 15 has a courtyard with a rock-cut bench with a head–rest along the sloping contour of the rock on the east and west side. The bench returns on the northern side into which the entrance has been cut. The verandah was, at one time, covered with a wooden *mandapa* as indicated by post holes. Alongside the sloping rock on east and west, a rock-cut drain runs past the post holes and drains out the water from the roof-top as also from the cave. (Plate 32)

The cave is entered through a doorway with Ganesha on the *lalata-bimba*.The off-sets at the lower level as also a rectangular projecting border of a niche to the west of the doorway would suggest that the doorway was re-cut and the facade refashioned at a later period. Originally its surface was flush with the surface of the niche and the eaves. In the niche there are two mortises but no image is in position. To the east of the entrance doorway is another niche with semi-circular top containing a loose image of Ganesha.
Ganesha is seated on his mount *musaka* (mouse) in *savya-lalitasana* pose holding in his upper right hand a goad (*ankusa*). The other (right) hand is broken. The upper left hand holds a lotus and the lower, a bowl of sweets (*modaka-patra*). The image is very much worn out.

The interior portion which can more appropriately be called *antarala* is at a lower level and therefore, provided with two landing steps. It has a bench running on both the sides along the walls, the portion on the eastern side being blocked up by two masonry slabs forming a pit. The entrance to the *garbha-griha* is through a plain doorway provided with plain *lalata-bimba*. It is flanked by one rectangular niche on either side.

The shrine doorway has a semi-circular doorstep which may have been once decorated with carvings but these are very much worn out. In the shrine there is a pedestal opposite the entrance doorway resting on a low bench. There is also a niche in the eastern portion of the back wall with a mortise for fixing an image. There are sockets near the ceiling near the side walls perhaps for insertion of a wooden ceiling. Besides, there are four more mortises on the western face of the wall, the purpose of which is not very clear.

CAVE 16

This cave having an open court is very much damaged with the fall of the portion of the roof including the upper part of the door-frame. From what remains of the door frame, it appears that it had simple door jambs and *ardhachandrasila* at the entrance. A narrow landing step leads to a plain rectangular hall without any benches. In the back wall is an unfinished, irregular *garbha-griha* with a low pedestal for an image which is not in position.

It appears that there were two sets of drains over the roof, one of which gave way with fall of the front portion of the roof. Thereafter, another rock-cut drain was excavated beyond the earlier one. It is likely that the cave was left incomplete but was used for installation of an image in the unfinished portion of the *garbha-griha.*

MASONRY PLATFORM

Very close to the cave is a masonry platform of which a few courses are *in-situ*. In the

Plate 32. Panhale
Façade of Cave 15, recut and provided with projecting borders to the niches

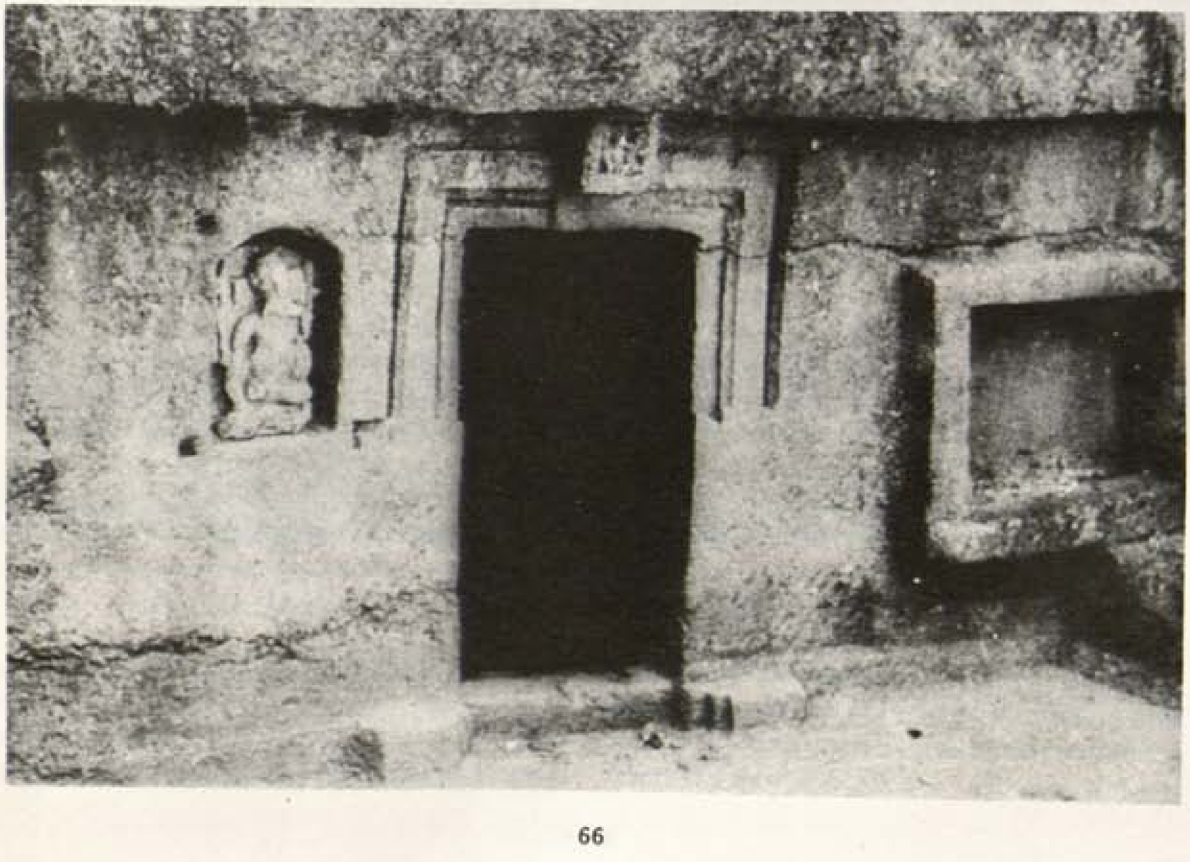
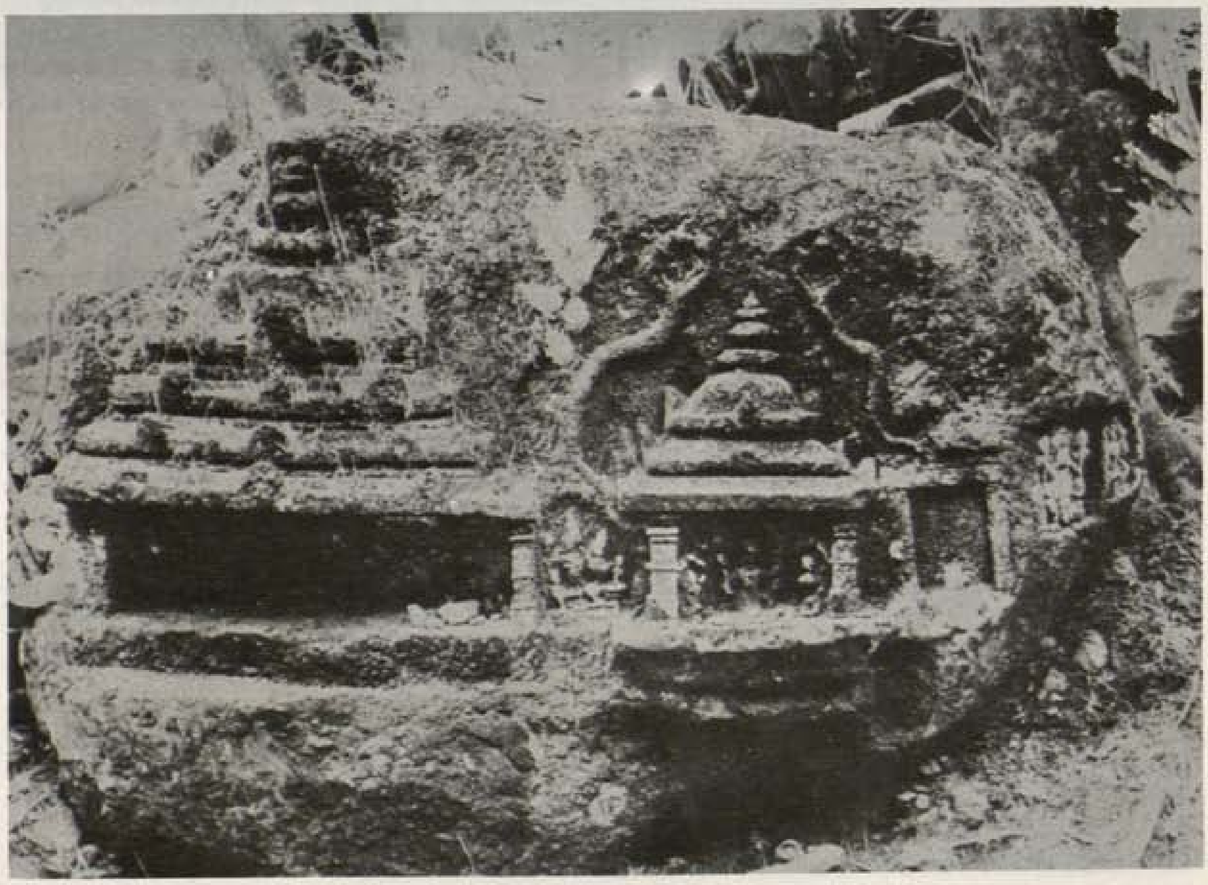


Plate 33. Panhale

Loose boulder with sculptured panels near pathway leading to Devranwadi.



courtyard of the cave there is a loose carved slab of a *devakostha* surmounted by a carved and stylised *purna-kalasa* motif apparently assignable to the Silahara-Yadava period. This may have belonged to the shrine near the cave.

Close to this cave are also two roofless rock-cut shrines (not numbered) the upper portions of which might have been destroyed during the extensive quarrying operations. It appears that a portion of the rock behind these shrines was used as a quarry and the horizontal step-like chiselling marks would indicate the manner in which large slabs were quarried by means of a special technique involving chiselling along the edges and then heating by placing burning charcoal in the cavities thus causing splitting of the rock along the chiselled portion. This technique is best understood from the remains of the quarry sites on the bank of the Dhakti river where the Archaeological Survey had exposed a temple and where dressed and undressed slabs (of which some are decorated) are lying *in-situ*.

A LOOSE BOULDER WITH SCULPTURED PANELS

On a loose boulder to the west of the pathway leading to Devaran Wadi and about 20 m. east of cave no. 17 are carved some sculptured panels (Plate 33). Starting from the left there is a deep niche surmounted by a three tiered *sikhara*, last member of which is a *kalasa* resting on an *amalaka*. This rectangular niche is bereft of any sculpture. This may have housed loose images of saptamatrikas or a Seshashayi image but the possibility of the existence of the former appears to be more plausible. Next to this is a small panel of Siva and Parvati in the *ardha-alingana* pose. Next, is a small shrine (*kostha*), smaller in dimension than the first, containing a seven hooded *naga* with serpentine lower part and human body above the waist. It is flanked by a female *nagi*, one on each side. Above the roof of the shrine, on either side is sculptured a five hooded *naga*. Next, is a shallow niche with a border. The sculpture inside has decayed beyond recognition. On the western side are two panels, the first containing a seated Ganesha and the other Saraswati (?) in *lalitasana*.

The popularity of the cult worship of *naga* at Panhale is attested by these sculptures. All the sculpture appears to belong to *circa* 11th – 12th century A.D.

Next to the boulder and up to the courtyard of cave 17 are the ruins of partly rock-cut and partly structural shrines.

CAVE 17

Cave 17 is the smallest among the caves having octagonal pillars on a dwarf wall similar to caves 2, 6 and 12. The cave has projecting eaves covering the large step-like platform of the cave. Beyond this is the entrance to the verandah formed by the two pillars with the octagonal shafts resting on square bases over the parapet, beyond which on either side is a pilaster of the same type. The capitals have rolled brackets without the usual *nagabandha* but have a medial rib covering the roll. The eastern side pillar is missing (Pl. 34).

The narrow verandah has a bench on either side with a rock-cut head-rest. There is a niche with semicircular top in the eastern side wall of the verandah.

What is most interesting in this cave



Plate 34A Panhale
Façade of cave 17.

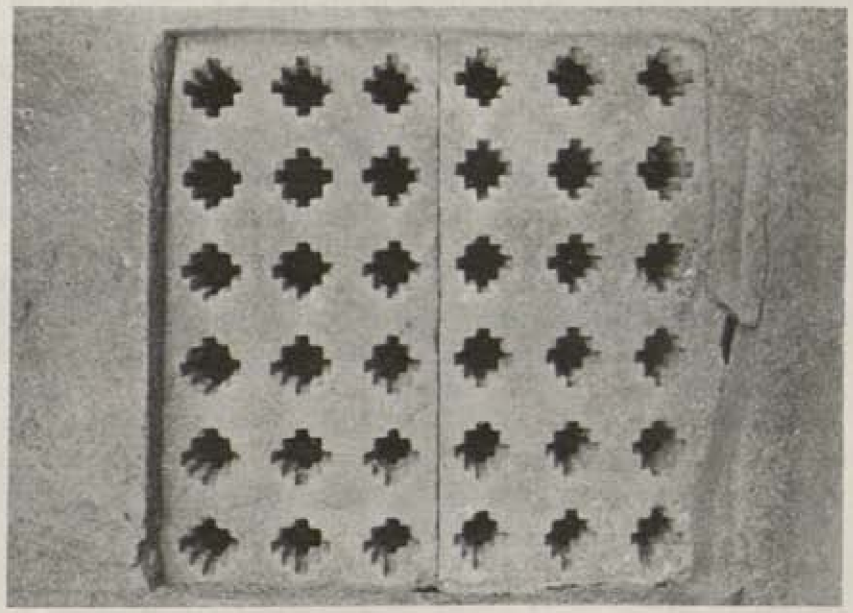


Plate 34B Panhale
Details of the perforated window of cave 17.

are the perforated *jalis* (Plate 34 B) fitted into the grooves cut in the thickness of the window which is disposed, on either side of the entrance door-way, leading to the interior hall.

The door-frame has a *ardhachandrasila* decoration on a low platform. It has two plain *sakhas* and a plain *lalata-bimba*. The *sakhas* are also reproduced on the door-sill which has a central protruding block. This doorway has been re-cut as is evident from the original surface which is still intact on either side of the doorframe.

Two landing steps lead into the floor of the hall, which has a bench running along its east and west wall and further at right angles upto the shrine doorway. It is also interesting that on the side walls, over the rock-cut bench, two pilasters have been carved in relief and these are provided with rolled brackets. The shaft is chamfered in its upper half. However, the pilasters on the western side are rectangular and incomplete. These features divide the hall into three bays; the central one being broader than the other two. In the ceiling there are three rock-cut holes for suspension of lamps or bells.

There is a shrine in the back wall provided with a *chandrasila* and plain door-jambs with two *sakhas*, the upper part of which is accentuated by a deep groove along the margin. The shrine is rectangular and contains a low pedestal at the back and has two rectangular niches on either side and also two mortises half way in both the side walls, perhaps intended to fix *prabhavali* over the image which is now missing. From this cave, during clearance operations were recovered loose images of Ganesha, Bhairava and a goddess and was used for brahmanical worship around the tenth century A.D. (*vide* reference on page 4).

GENERAL OBSERVATION ON CAVES 18 TO 23

Cave 18 is separated from 17 by about 23 meters. The caves from 18 to 21 were attempted together as a unified plan with common eaves although the thickness of the eaves over the façade of cave 21 is slightly less. It appears that caves 18 and 21 were completed first and while the work was in progress, a huge chunk of rock together with the portion of the upper part of the façade of the cave 19 fell down.

Caves 18 and 21 were meant to be Vajrayana shrines, although in the verandah of the cave 21, an image of Ganesha came to be carved. Cave 18 has no image whatsoever. Both these caves have octagonal pillars on the façade, the only difference between these two caves is that cave 21 has windows flanking the entrance to the hall, a feature absent in cave 18 . Further, the halls in both the caves do not have benches.

Caves 19 and 20 were planned and excavated after the Vajrayana influence had waned, and the caves were taken charge of by the Saiva followers. Cave 19 was planned in a rather ambitious manner, with a four pillared *sabha mandapa* and a monolithic *linga* shrine behind. This is the only cave which has pillars in the hall and conforms to the Yadava period pattern of temples. While carving out the cave, fresh eaves at a lower level, had to be provided together with necessary arrangement for drainage of water.

CAVE 18

A flight of five steps leads to a rock-cut

courtyard beyond which is the pillared façade of the verandah of this cave. The pillars have octagonal shafts slightly tapering towards the top, resting on parapet and with a corresponding pilaster at either end. The pillars have rolled brackets with *nagabandha*. The octagonal shaft starts from a square base, little above the level of the parapet. In the verandah, on either side, is a rock-cut bench with head-rest at the southern end.

A doorway with plain *dvara-sakha* and a block for the *lalata-bimba* provides entrance to the interior hall. In the hall , there is a bench against the side walls . Another plain doorway leads to the *garbha-griha* which is bereft of any cult object. It appears that in the *garbha-griha* there was good deal of seepage of rain water through cracks. This water was channelled out along the bench on the eastern side of the hall and let out into the verandah through a perforation in the partition wall between the verandah and the hall and further outside the cave through a hole in the parapet wall.

This cave, like caves 2, 6 and 12 has octagonal pillars, plain *lalata-bimba*, rock-cut beds with head-rest. The cave would therefore belong to the Vajrayana phase. It differs from caves 2 and 6 in so far as it has no window on either side of the entrance to the hall.

CAVE 19

The cave has a flight of steps leading to a courtyard having deep and regular post-holes, three on either side, for erection of a covered wooden *mandapa*. From this courtyard another flight of three steps,cut in a platform with low balustrade, leads into the pillared hall. A huge chunk of rock which fell from the roof-top, blocks a clear view of the cave. From the extant remains of the façade it would appear that this cave has two eaves with semicircular merlon-like bosses at intervals. The upper eaves would correspond with the height of the eaves of cave 21, alongwith which it was originally planned but the progress was hindered due to the fall of the chunk of rock in the forecourt.

It is not unlikely that originally this cave was meant to have an entrance way with rolled bracket capitals but at a period of time when this attempt had not progressed sufficiently the cave was modified. The characteristic pillars and pilasters of the Yadava period suggest that this change took place in *circa* 12th century A.D.

The main entrance to the cave has a dooway flanked by a window opening on each side with grooves for insertion of a grated windows. (Plate 35). This feature, peculiar to the Vajrayana caves appears to have been done away with in order to provide better light into the cave which was later planned to be deep and with sculptured panels on the ceiling. On either side of the door-opening , a typical pillar of the Yadava period with mouldings alternating with *kani* moulding has been provided. The shafts has, in its upper part a rectangular member terminating at the top with a rounded *kalasa* with triangular fillets over which is placed a bracket which shows, in some part, a roughly hewn rolled end. The lintel with its decorative string courses is interrupted by later cuts for anchoring rafters of the front wooden *mandapa*.

From this entrance doorway, one enters the main hall by means of a step to reach its floor . The interior plan is as follows:

At the farthest end is a monolithic saivite

shrine with a low tiered roof surmounted by a square pinnacle on the top on which is carved an *amalaka*. There is a circumambulation path around the shrine at a higher level. Opposite the shrine is a hall provided with a long and high bench on either side with a moulded and partly sculptured *adhisthana* running round the monolithic shrine. However, the hall, is supported by four typical Yadava period pillars supporting beams with two armed brackets having *kichaka* figures on the underside.(Pl.36,37 and 40).Thus, the front *mandapa* is three bays wide and deep. The ceiling of the central and front bay carries a lotus in relief,the middle bay however, has a decorative bell-shaped lotus. The other portion of the ceiling on either side, is filled with sculptured panels. Beyond the middle bay lies what may be termed as the *antrala* which leads further into the monolithic shrine. The shrine has a stepped entrance over which is carved *ardhachandrasila*. The doorway is flanked by a pilaster and a standing saiva *dwarapala* (Pl.37–9). An attempt has been made to provide a moulded bench in the circumambulation path where, at the farthest end, two *devakosthas*, facing north have been excavated .The moulded bench on the west is complete (though damaged in part) but one on the eastern side is incomplete. In the portion of the *antarala*, excavated into the eastern and western wall are two *devakosthas* which are also left incomplete. It would thus appear that the shrine was intended to be a *panchayatana* shrine, although a small additional incomplete *devakostha* was attempted as an adjunct to the one in the western wall.

To sum up, the cave has a rectangular hall supported on four pillars and two pilasters in alignment with the two front pillars, a moulded high bench on either side, a monolithic shrine with provision for circumambulation and four more *devakosthas* to give it a *panchayatana* character.

The four pillars (Plates 36–40) in the *mandapa*, each has a broad square *adhisthana*. Over it, the pillar is square in section up to a certain height. Thereafter, by means of chamfering of the corners, an octagonal part is obtained which is decorated with the *padma-bandha*. Thereafter, the shaft becomes cylindrical with a slight taper at the top. It has a central raised octagonal band having a decoration of lozenges and circles placed alternately. Over this is the *kalasa* portion of the shaft with *kani* moulding and a rounded moulding with four triangular fillets covering it. Over this is the *griva* and the *phalaka* surmounted by a rectangular block supporting two-armed brackets having four armed *kichakas* on the under side. This pillar order helps us to date the cave to about the 11th –12th cent. A.D.

Reverting to the sculptures on the ceiling we start with the panels carved in the front bay. On the eastern side, there are 12 panels separated by rectangular bands crossing each other while on the western side only six panels have been carved four in one row and two in the other.

The twelve panels, (Plate 41) on the eastern side, termed as 'A' pertain to the episode from the Ramayana. The incidents however are not narrated in a definite order, although an attempt has been made to depict some important subjects.

A 1. The panel in the south-east corner shows Rama seated under a tree with Laksmana holding a bow and an arrow. They

Plate 35. Panhale

Entrance of cave 19. The window on either side, probably had stone grills fitted in grooves.

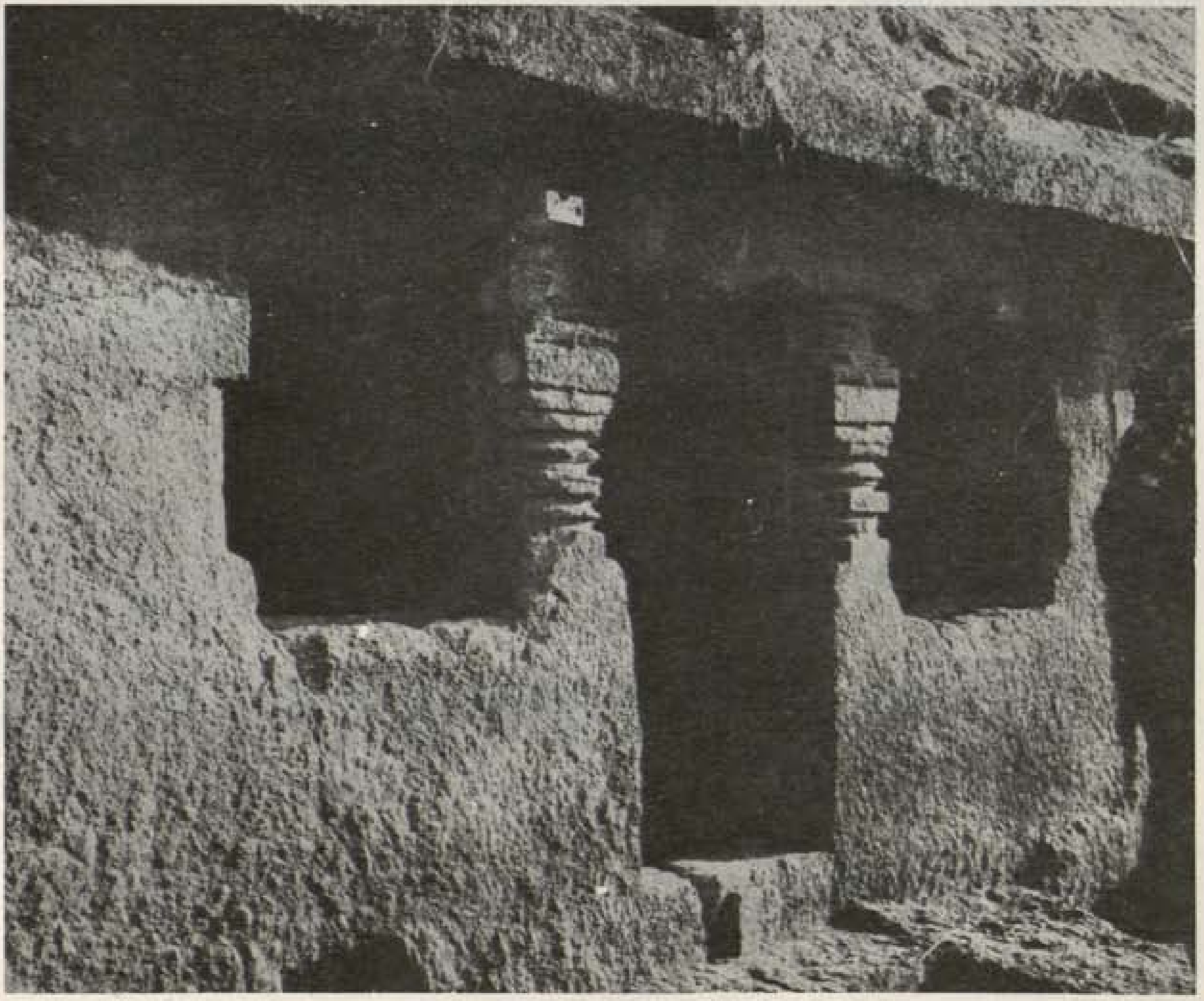


Plate 36. Panhale

Interior of *sabha-mandapa* showing pillars and a partial view of *garbha-griha* of cave 19.



Plate 37. Panhale
Interior showing *garbha-griha* with *dwarapalas* of cave 19.

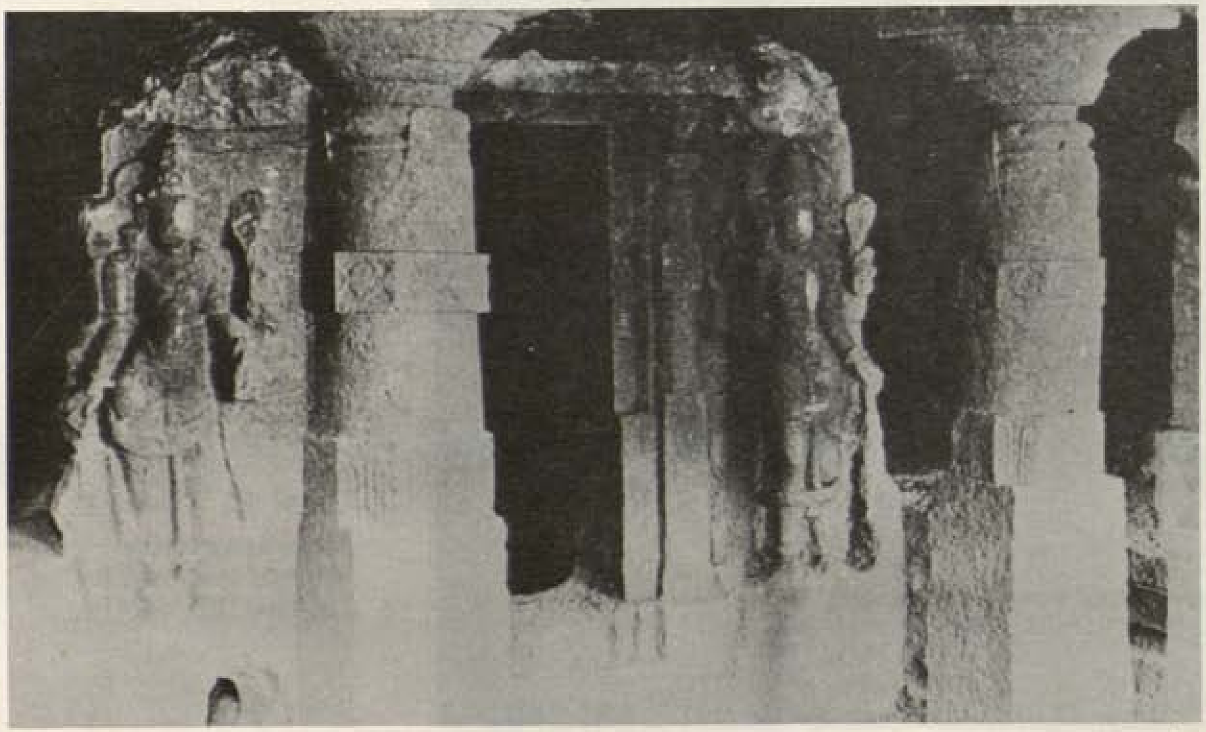




Plate 38. Panhale
Dwarapala to the left of *garbha-griha* of cave 19.



Plate 39. Panhale
Dwarapala to the right of *garbha-griha* of cave 19.

Plate 40. Panhale

Interior of cave 19 showing pillars and the sculptured ceiling.



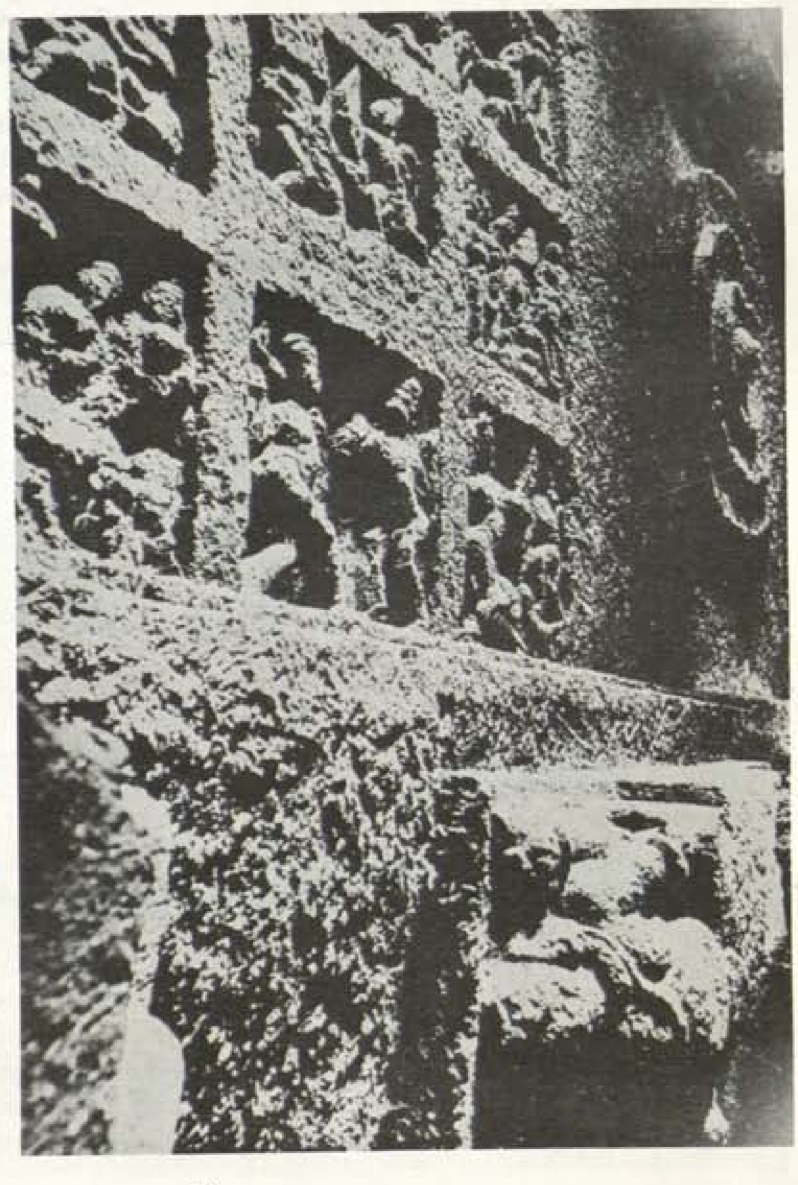


Plate 41. Panhale

Scenes from *Ramayana* on the ceiling of cave 19.

are shown meeting the monkey chiefs, Sugriva and Hanumana.

A 2. The adjoining panel towards the west depicts the commencement of fight between Vali and Sugriva.

A 3. The third panel in continuation shows the fight between Lakshmana and Indrajit, the latter hero standing in a horse-drawn chariot.

A 4. The next part of the episode is narrated in the western panel of the second row where Rama is holding Laksmana in his lap after the latter had swooned during the course of the fight. Two other royal figures and monkeys are also shown.

A 5. In the next panel we see Hanumana carrying the Dronagiri mountain on his two uplifted hands. Here, this part of the episode ends.

A 6. The next panel to the north-west corner) shows Sita standing outside a hut with Ravana in the garb of a saiva ascetic with a begging bowl in the right hand and a trident in the left. The subject of the panel is Ravana's attempt to abduct Sita.

A 7. The next panel in the central row on the northern side is not quite complete but appears to suggest Ravana's taking away Sita in an aerial chariot. Here the large triangular uncarved block was meant to depict his ten heads. The bird Jatayu is shown pecking at Ravana's knee.

A 8. The second panel in the southern direction clearly shows Rama in the act of shooting an arrow at Maricha depicted in an anthropomorphic form, the hind part being of the deer.

A 9. The next (southern) panel shows the fight between Rama and Ravana. The heads of Ravana are not carved properly but a large uncarved block could only be indicative of the Ravana's heads.

A 10. The next panel towards the east shows monkeys carrying blocks of stones for the construction of a bridge (*setu*) to Lanka.

A 11. The adjoining panel, to the north, shows Sita in Asoka *vana* with the monkey god Hanuman perched on a tree and then kneeling at her feet probably in the act of showing her the identification ring.

A 12. The last panel in the north-eastern corner shows Sita with a demon, the latter wielding a sword, frightening her to accept Ravana's overtures. At the same time we see flames indicating the burning of Lanka by Hanumana.

There are six panels termed as 'B' on the western side, which deal with the life of Krishna. (plate 46).

B 1. Of the two panels on the eastern side the first one from the north depicts Putana, the child killer with her bare breast inviting Krishna who is shown under a tree near by. The carving is very crude and the artist has not succeeded in showing young Krishna properly.

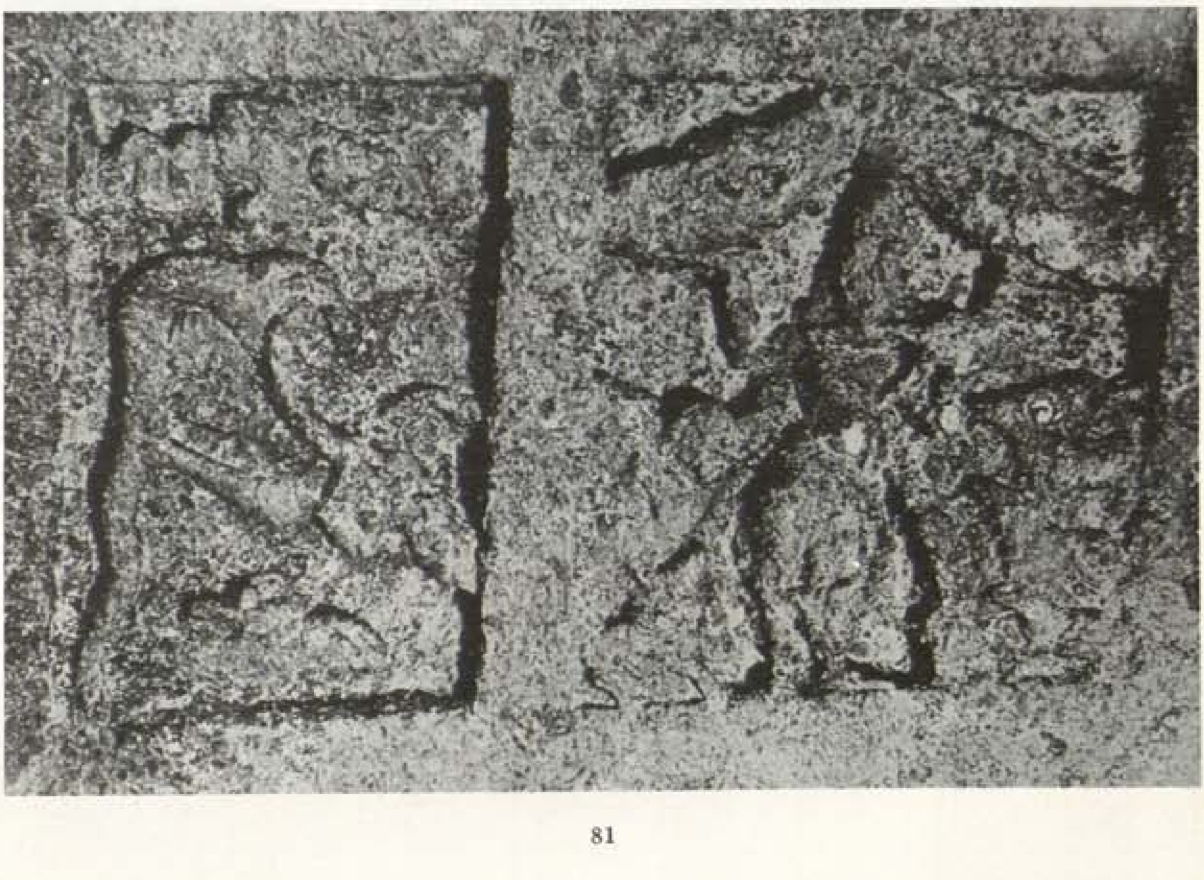
B 2. The second panel in this line, shows young Krishna with a conical cap facing an elephant, probably suggesting his fight with Kuvalayapida.

B 3. In the adjoining panel, on the west, the elephant is shown held by a person by the trunk and also by the leg. This may depict Krishna in the act of hurling the elephant in the air.

B 4. The next panel shows Putana seated on a stool in front of a tree suckling Krishna in her arm.

Plate 42. Panhale

Govardhandhari Krishna and Kaliya *mardana* panels on ceiling of cave 19.



B 5. In the next panel, on the northern side, are shown two heroes locked in a fight with bows and arrows. The figures are cut very crudely and the subject cannot be identified.

B 6. In the next panel, the subject is not clear, but it shows a royal figure under a *chhatra* with some other figures. It may be a scene representing restoration of the throne to Kamsa's father.

There are eight panels in the central bay on the eastern side and are termed as 'C'. Of the three, one quadrant is left uncarved.

C 1. The first panel, next to the uncarved quadrant shows Krishna stamping on the *naga* Kaliya, whose tongue he has pulled out with the other hand. (Plate 42) He is further shown bestowing *abhaya* to the wife of Kaliya who is shown in an anthropomorphic form with a cobra-hood on her head. Behind Krishna stands another human figure.

C 2. In the next panel there is a scene depicting Krishna's fight with Kamsa who wields a mace in his right hand. Behind Krishna there is one more figure.

C 3. The next panel, on the north, shows Indra on an elephant. He holds a goad in his right hand. A female figure is also shown frontally behind the elephant. The panel is not complete. This might represent Indra, whose worship was given up by the people of Vraja,and as a consequence he had brought torrential rains over the Vraja country.

C 4. The subject of the central panel is Govardhanadhari Krishna (Plate 42). He has six hands, his upper two supporting the mountain, the middle two holding a lotus and a mace and the remaining two playing on flute. On either sides are shown cows.

C 5. The third panel, in the middle row to the south, shows an incomplete depiction of a female figure with her two hands lifted up. Her bare breasts are visible. This may be an attempt to represent the killing of Putana by Krishna.

C 6. The next panel at the southern end shows the horse-demon, Keshin who was killed by Krishna. The crouching figure is the demon Keshin on whose back Krishna stands, subjugating him.

C 7. This may represent Vasudeva crossing Yamuna and delivering baby Krishna in Yashodas' lap in exchange of her daughter.

C 8. The next panel is incomplete and indifferently carved but there are enough indications to suggest that it may be representing Kamsa in the act of flinging the baby (Adisakhi) who was born before Krishna.

In the centre of the ceiling is the representation of a fully blown lotus (Plate 43). The petals are shown in the form of cusps and one is reminded of similar treatment in the Jain temples at Dilwara where, however, the treatment is extremely delicate and dexterously executed.

In the portion, nearer the inner lintel and the orb of the circular lotus, is a panel showing worship of the *Sivalinga.* (Plate 44). It is kept on an *adhisthana* with the bull in front. On either side there are two figures . The one of the western side is a male with his consort behind him in the act of worship. The couple may indicate the donor couple. On the other side is a female holding garland and behind her, on a raised seat, is seated a figure under a parasol. The corresponding portion on the north is left

Plate 43. Panhale
Inverted lotus and other scenes on the ceiling of *antarala* of cave 19.

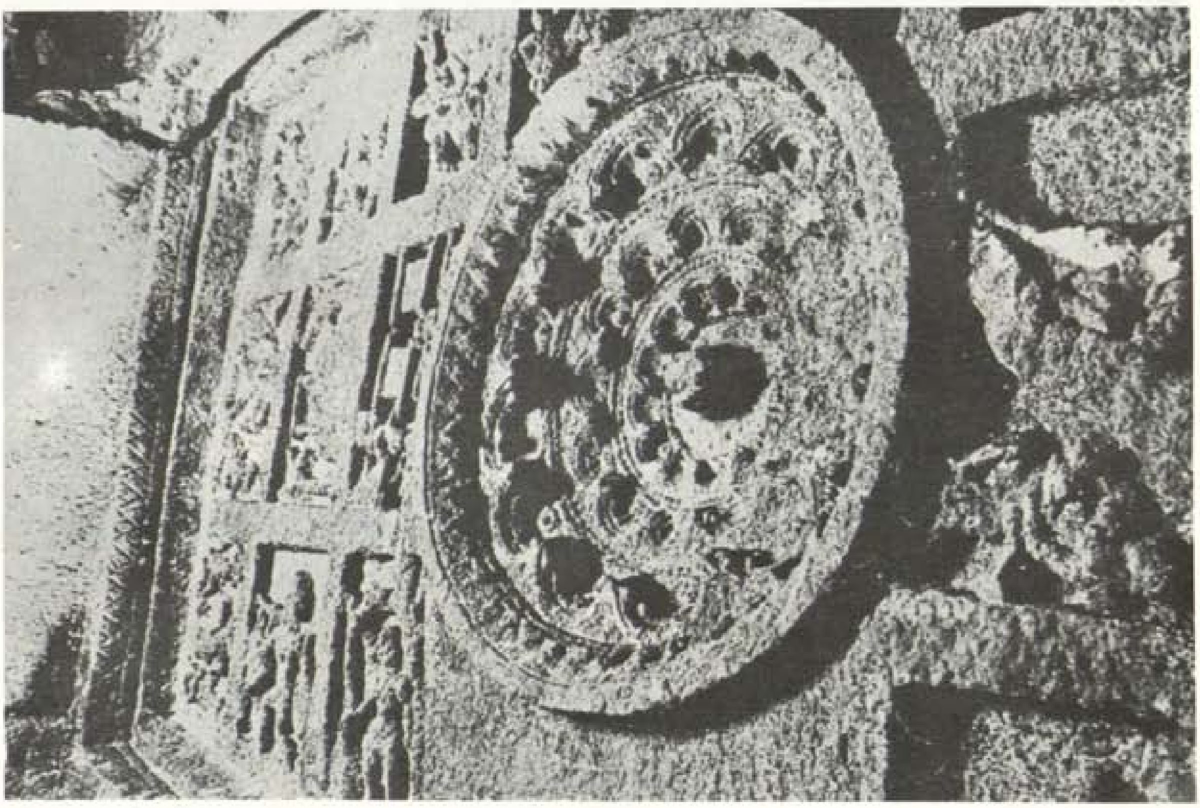


Plate 44. Panhale

Donor couple worshipping *Sivalinga,* on the ceiling of cave 19.



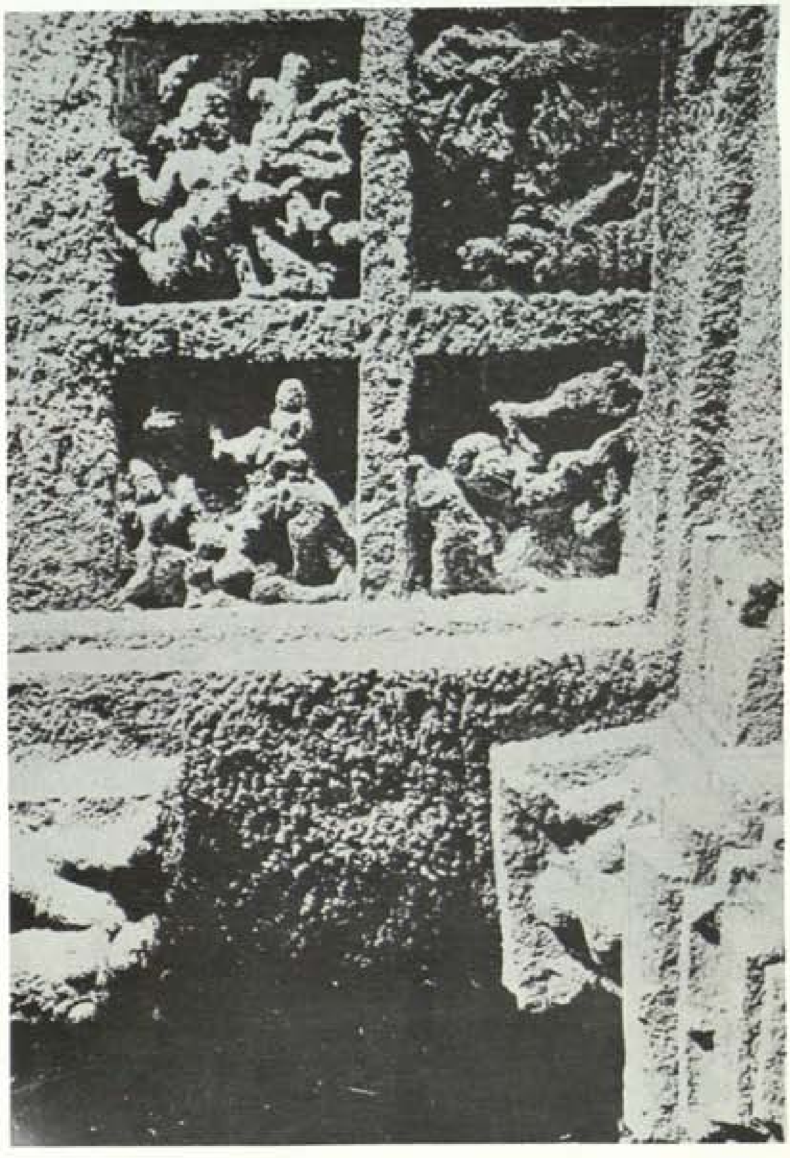


Plate 45. Panhale
Krishnalila scenes
on the ceiling
of cave 19.

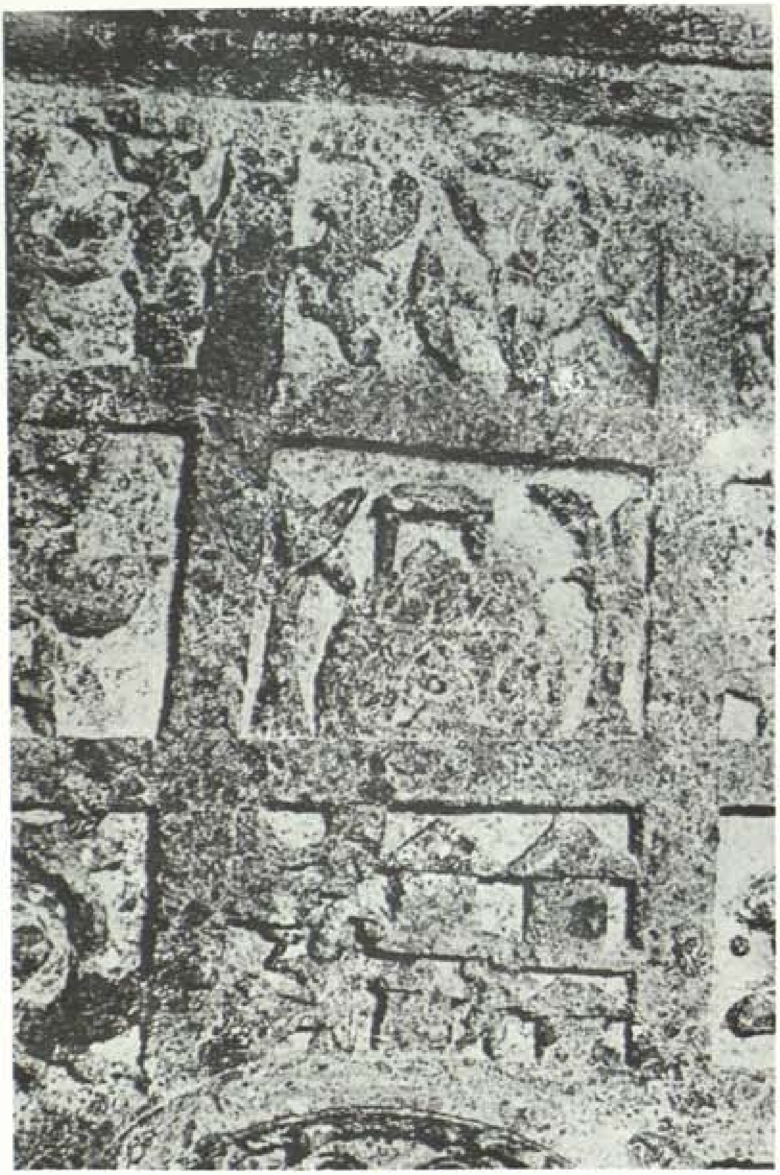


Plate 46. Panhale
Scenes from Kiratarjuniyam, on the ceiling of cave 19.

uncarved.

There are nine panels termed 'D' on the western side.

D 1. The one near the pillar capital depicts Lakshmi-Narayana being carried in the aerial region by Vishnu's mount, Garuda.

D 2. The next panel shows four huts, (Plate 46) two with conical roofs and with three human figures of which one is between two pairs of huts and two on the farther side. There is also a fourth figure indifferently carved. This appears to be Arjuna meeting his brothers who were in exile, the four huts representing the huts of the other four Pandavas. This scene is connected with the *Kiratarjuniya* panel and bears striking resemblance to the depiction of the story in a pillar, in the *navaranga*, of Virupaksha temple[6].

D 3. The next panel shows a two-armed standing figure between two stylised trees forming an arch above his head. This subject has not been identified.

D 4. The adjoining panel in the central row depicts a person carrying two baskets slung to a rod,held on his shoulder. This could be either Sravanakumara carrying his blind parents or Parasurama carrying the corpse of his father and his mother in a basket slung on his shoulder.

D 5. The second panel of the central row shows perhaps a *sivalinga* under a canopy on a raised pedestal ornamented with decorative trees on both sides. This may form part of the Kiratarjuniya episode depicted in panel D2 and D7.

D 6. The next panel in the same row (Pl.47) is incomplete.It shows two trees and may be a subject connected with the Kiratarjuniya episode.

D 7. This appears to depict the encounter between Arjuna (wearing bark garments) and Siva as *Kirata*.

D 8. The panel is in continuation of the previous panel and exhibits an archer (kirata) shooting an arrow at the boar. Behind the archer stands a male figure.

D 9. The next panel in the corner shows a tree with cows and female figures on both sides. This has not been identified.

The *garbha-griha* is entered from the north but it has also an opening on the opposite side. In the centre of the *garbha-griha* is a sunk portion for receiving the pedestal of the *siva-linga* . Above it on the ceiling is carved a circular inverted lotus like the one in the *Sambha-mandapa*. It is quite likely that originally there was a *Siva-linga* in the centre of the *garbha-griha* and an image in the rear-niche. In the south-western corner there is a rock-cut water storage tank. There is also a crude rectangular niche in the western wall.

On either side of the door-way of the shrine are *dwarapalas* (Pl.37).The one on the eastern side holds a *damaru* in the upper right hand and the snake in the upper left hand, a mace in the lower right hand and perhaps an *akshamala* in the lower left hand. He wears matted locks, heavy *karnakundalas, phalakahara, channavira* , and a lower garment with a waist-belt, the folds of the undergarment falling within the legs. He wears an *uttariya* the end of which is shown hanging to the left. He wears *naga-keyuras,* wristlets and anklets. The other *dwarapala*, on the western side

Plate 47. Panhale
Frieze on the bench of cave 19.

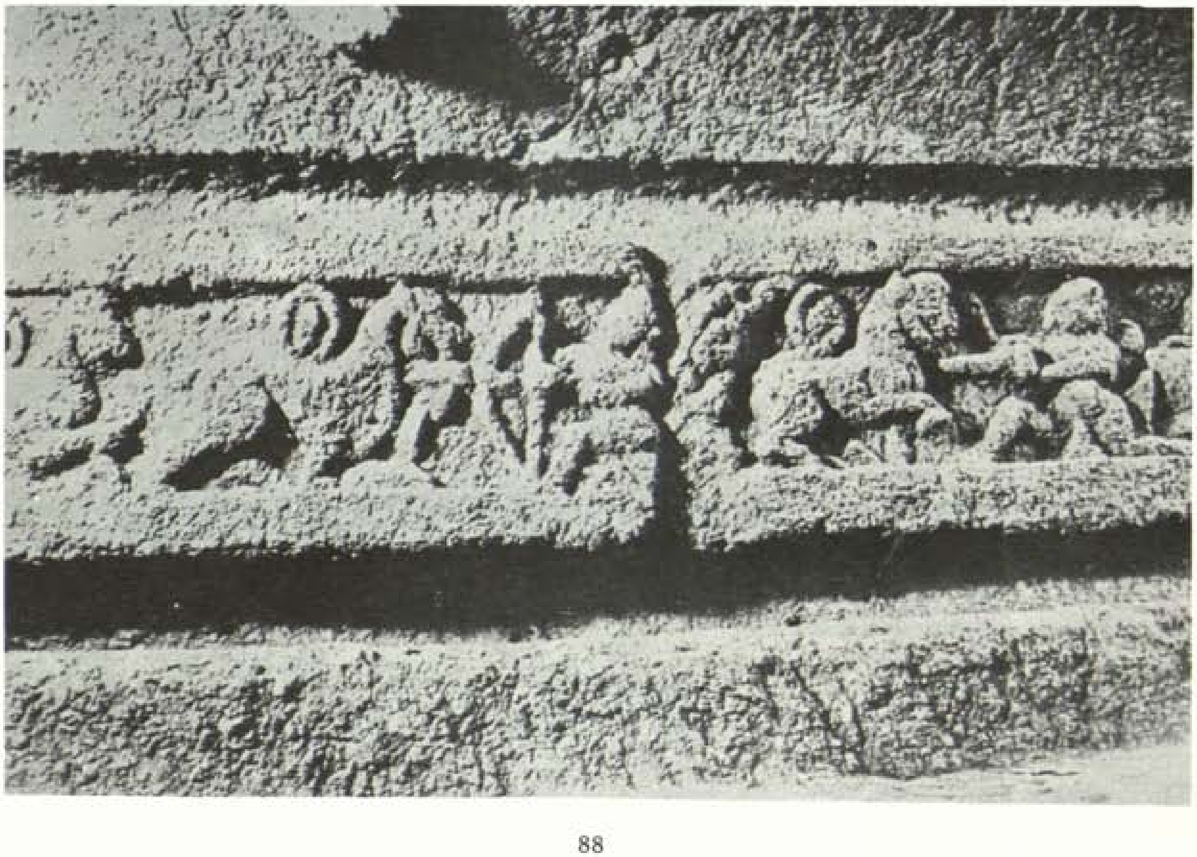
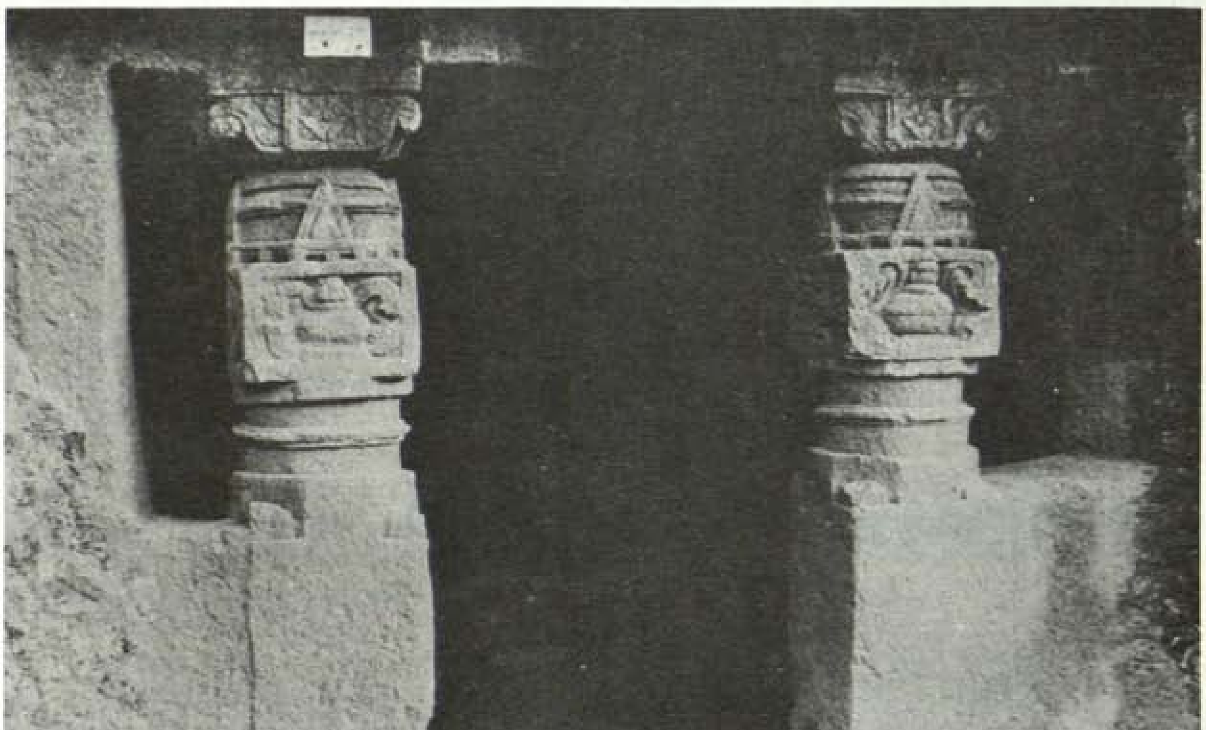


Plate 48. Panhale
Façade of cave 20.



holds a trident and a serpent in his upper right and left hand respectively. The lower left hand holds a mace and the right perhaps an *akshamala.* The figure is incomplete but was intended to be carved in the same manner as the corresponding figure on the eastern side.

In the *Sabha-mandapa* on the central broad band above basal mouldings of the bench is carved a long frieze depicting an hunting scene. It shows rows of elephants, and a human figure being carried in a palanquin and there are also scenes of boar hunting (Pl. 47).

CAVE 20

This is a small cave with an open court provided with a flight of steps. It appears that this cave was accommodated in the portion between caves 19 and 21 and is a shade later than cave 19. It's eaves which are in continuation of those of caves 19 have not been fully worked. From the court, one gains entrance to the verandah through two pillars centrally placed on the parapet and forming part thereof.

The pillars are distinctive (Plate 48) in having, in the centre of the shaft, a stylised *ghata-pallava* motif carved on all the four sides. Above this, the *kalasa* portion is circular with triangular fillets over three string courses. The capital is decorated with a floral lozenge. The short arms of the brackets are rolled and have *nagabandha* over it. A rectangular depression in the floor opposite the entrance was evidently intended for installing a loose image of *nandi*.The verandah has a bench on its right side with an indication of a pillow. The *garbha-griha* entrance has plain *sakhas,* and *lalata-bimba,* and on the door sill, on the either side of the central block are carved floral lozenges.

In the *garbha-griha* there is a socket with raised border for fixing the *adhisthana* of *Siva-linga.*

The cave walls and ceiling have traces of white lime plaster with red colour.

CAVE 21

This cave is popularly known as Ganesha *lena* on account of the image of Ganesh carved in a large niche in the eastern wall of the verandah. The cave has almost similar architectural features as those in caves 2, 6, 12, 17 and 18.

It has a broad flight of steps running along the entire length of the court and a bench running all along its sloping edge on the western side. There was probably a full length bench at the eastern end, half of which, it appears has been done away with. There are post holes on the platform for the erection of a protective wooden *mandapa* in front. There is a broad step running all along the length of its façade. Entrance to the verandah is gained through two octagonal pillars resting on the parapet wall. The verandah which measures 8.40 m x 2.45 m. has a pillowed bench on either side. The pillars have rolled brackets with *nagabandha.* The back wall of the verandah is pierced by a central entrance having plain *dvarasakhas, lalata-bimba* and also a plain central block on the door sill. On either side of this block there once existed a lozenge shaped decoration which is now much abraded. There is also a small raised platform in front of the doorway having *ardhachandrasila* carved on it. On both sides of the doorway, is a window opening with a broad groove for fixing per-



Plate 49. Panhale
Ganesha in the varandah of cave 21.



Plate 50. Panhale
Saraswati from cave 22.

forated window-grills.

Two landing steps lead to in the interior of the hall which is provided with a bench all-round and against the walls except at the entrance to the *garbha-griha.*

This entrance to the *garbha-griha* is wider than the entrane to the hall. It is not provided with *lalata-bimba*. The oblong shrine chamber has a low *adhisthana* for the image, which is, however not in position. It is not unlikely that the shrine contained an object of worship of Buddhist affiliation. There is a rock-cut drain to drain out water that seeped into the *garbha-griha* and the hall. This water was drained out through an opening below the eastern window and outside the cave through a hole in the parapet.

This is one of the largest excavations, the hall measuring 10.99 m. x 4.69 m. The ceiling of the hall has a slight slope on the outer side.

The image of Ganesha in the outer verandah (Plate 49) in a semi - circular niche is rock-cut and probably came to be carved in *circa* 12th century A.D. when caves 19 and 20 came to be carved. Ganesha holds an axe & a lotus in the upper right and left hand respectingly and a broken tusk and a bowl of sweets in the lower hands. He is seated on a low seat in *savya-lalitasana* with his mount *mushaka* shown near his seat below the left leg. The elephantine face and other parts are boldly cut. He wears a *karanda-mukuta* of three tiers. He also wears a *yajnopavita* and entwinning his belly (*naga-udarabandha*),*keyuras,* wristlets and anklets.

CAVE 22

The cave is a small excavation with a rock-cut courtyard with a bench along its eastern side together with a deep rectangular niche with a socket in it for insertion of an image. The cave has an entrance flanked,on either side by a Yadava period pillar. The small verandah has niches in the eastern and western walls containing an image of Ganesha and Sarswati respectively, both being rock-cut.

The image of Ganesha in the eastern wall is seated in the *ardha-parayankasana.* In the upper right hand he holds an axe, and in the left a lotus which is damaged. The lower hands are broken. He wears a *graivayaka,* a beaded *keyura,* anklets and wristlets and a three tiered *karandamukuta.*

The Sarswati image (Plate 50) on the opposite side is seated in *lalitasana.* The image is very much damaged. She appears to hold a lotus stalk in her upper right hand, a *vina* in her upper left hand. The lower right hand is broken. She may have held an *akshamala* and a palm leaf in her lower left hands.A swan is seen pearched by the side of her suspended leg. She has a *prabhavali* around her face, and wears heavy *manikundala,* a *phalaka-hara* of four strands, *stanahara, keyuras,* wristlets, and anklets. The folds of the lower garment are seen falling in the centre of the *adhisthana.*

The *garbha-griha* has plain *dvarasakhas* and *lalata-bimba* but the door sill has floral lozenges on either side of the central block. There is a small rectangular *adhisthana* in the verandah for the nandi.

In the *garbha-griha* there is a socket for insertion of . *yonipatta.* On the backwall is a shallow niche containing a male figure in *vyakhyana-mudra* and seated in *padmasana.* It is now badly damaged. However, the figure sporting a side bun of the *jatabhara,* a beard and three strands of beaded *mekhala* may

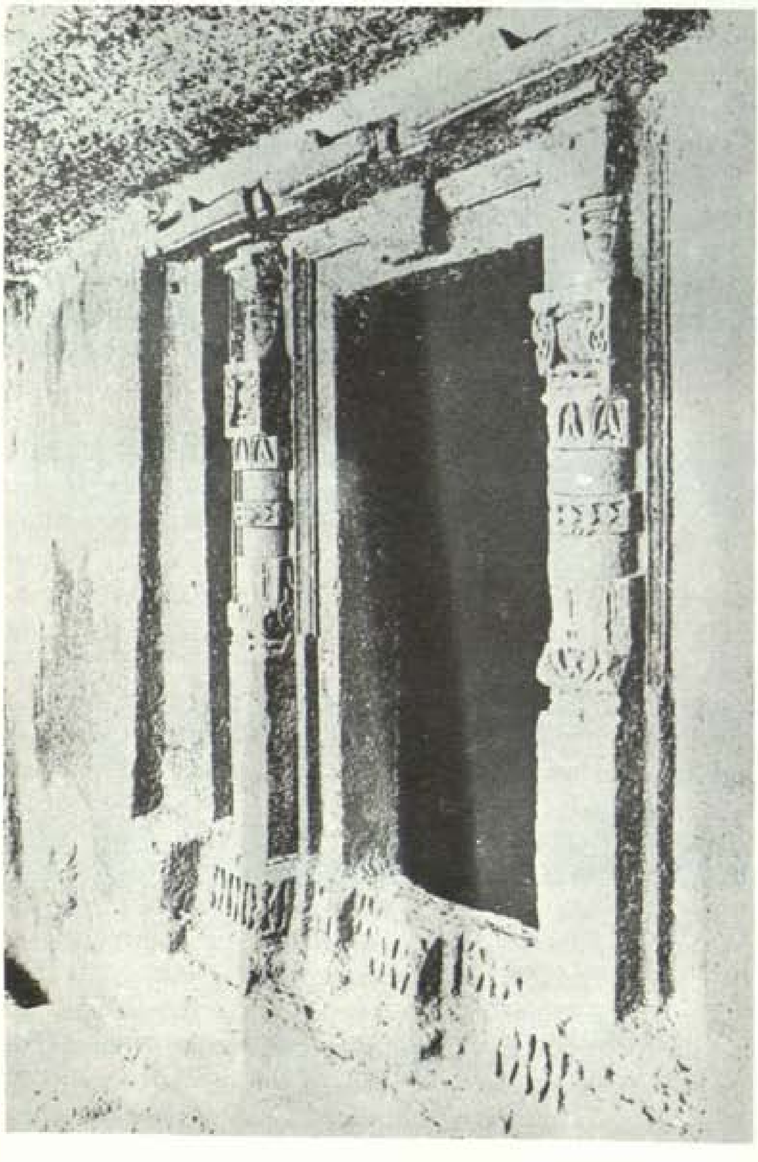


Plate 51. Panhale
Entrance doorway
of cave 23.

perhaps indicate a nath-*yogi*.

CAVE 23

The cave has an open courtyard with a cell in the western sloping wall of its court. The cell has plain doorway, *lalata-bimba* and a central block on its door sill.The façade of the main cave is relieved by two centrally disposed pillars resting in the parapet and forming an entrance to the verandah. The pillars betray typical Yadava period features in having a square base, an octagonal *padma-bandha*, a round shaft relieved in the centre by a bold band of lozenge and bead design and *kalasa* with triangular fillets and voluted brackets with *naga-bandha*. The central part of the bracket has two vertical lozenges placed in two compartments. The pilasters have projections and recesses, a broad band of lozenges and beads and a scroll and *nagaba-ndha* capital.

In the verandah there is a bench with a head-rest at either end but on the western side there is a shrine provided with a plain door way with two *dvara-sakhas*. Inside there is a deep rectangular niche containing a bearded ascetic in *dhyana-mudra* and *padmasana* and the other a female figure in *anjali-mudra*.

On the opposite wall is a small rectangular niche without any image.

Entrance to the hall is relieved by a deeply cut door frame (Plate 51) with pilasters having *purna-ghata* in its upper part and bead *cum* lozenge band below. The *lalata-bimba* is plain and over it, supported by pilasters are projecting eaves covering the entrance door way. On the pillar bases and on the door sill, there are compartments containing vertical lozenge-shaped decorations. Below the door step on a low raised platform are remains of *ardhachandrasila*. This is by far, the most developed form of a Yadava period door-frame (6.10 m.x 1.86 m.).

The *garbha-griha* has a crudely cut door opening. Inside, the hall is oblong but rather irregular and measures roughly 6.10 m x 1.86 m. Inside, near the back-wall is a damaged rock-cut platform. The *garbha-griha* was further extended in an irregular manner to the west and this part which was rather dark was lighted by cutting a rectangular opening into the side wall of the hall. It appears that the cave was unfinished.

Beyond this cave a series of rock-cut steps have been cut which lead to the top of the hill. A little distance away an attempt has been made to excavate a cave but the attempt was given up when horizontal fissures were encountered in the rock.

The group of caves from 24 to 28 are separated by some distance from the group of caves described above.

CAVE 24

The cave has a wide open courtyard with a bench running along the back and the sloping sides. A plain doorway with two plain *sakhas* and a central rounded block on the door sill, leads one to the inner hall.The interesting feature seen here is that the lintel is a separate block with a rectangular opening above it acting like a ventilator. This opening was sought to be made semicircular towards the top,but this idea was given up as the thickness of the rock was not considered adequate.It appears that the opening was provided with timber cross bars as suggested by the sockets on either side.

Inside, we find, for the first time, two pillars placed almost in the centre on a

slightly raised edge of the eastern part of the cave. There are corresponding pilasters on the western wall carved on a rock-cut bench which runs along the west and the back wall upto the line of pillars. The pillars are square in section and have no architectural feature and appear to be intended as support to the weak section of the sloping rock above.

There is an attempt at carving out a niche between the two pilasters on the western wall.

In the absence of any shrine, this cave might have been used as a *satra* during Vajrayana phase of occupation of Panhale, where the visitors rested and dined during their visit to this religious centre.

MONOLITHIC SHRINE

A little distance away in the courtyard of cave 25, is a small monolithic shrine with a mortise for the *yonipatta*. There is a broken image of *nandi* outside facing the shrine. In the cell there is a rock-cut cistern above the floor level . Close by, to the east of the rock-cut shrine have been excavated remains of a structural temple, where in the centre was a slab for receiving the *yonipatta*, which was also recovered in the course of excavation. The *linga* was a separate piece and was inserted in the round hole carved in the centre of the slab. The superstructure above the shrine is missing except for three heavy receding courses at the rear.

CAVE 25

Behind the monolithic shrine, described above, the rock face has been cut into an arc with a low bench running all along, at the western end of which, is a door leading into cave 25, which is just a plain rectangular hall. The hall however, is incomplete. At the rear side of the hall, opposite the doorway, an attempt has been made to carve a rectangular niche, which is incomplete.

This appears to be one of the latest excavations which does not follow any premeditated architectural pattern. Above the roof level there is a wide cavity in the rock and the water oozing out of this cavity was drained out by cutting a drain in the projecting eaves.

CAVE 26

In the rock projecting beyond the façade of cave 25 on the western side, a cell was excavated to accommodate a sculpture. The *vedi* kept over a rock-cut platform in the cell was meant to receive the cult image which is missing. There is a deep and wide niche , on either side, in the cell. The doorway with two *dvarasakh-s* is plain. This also appears to be one of the latest excavations at the site.

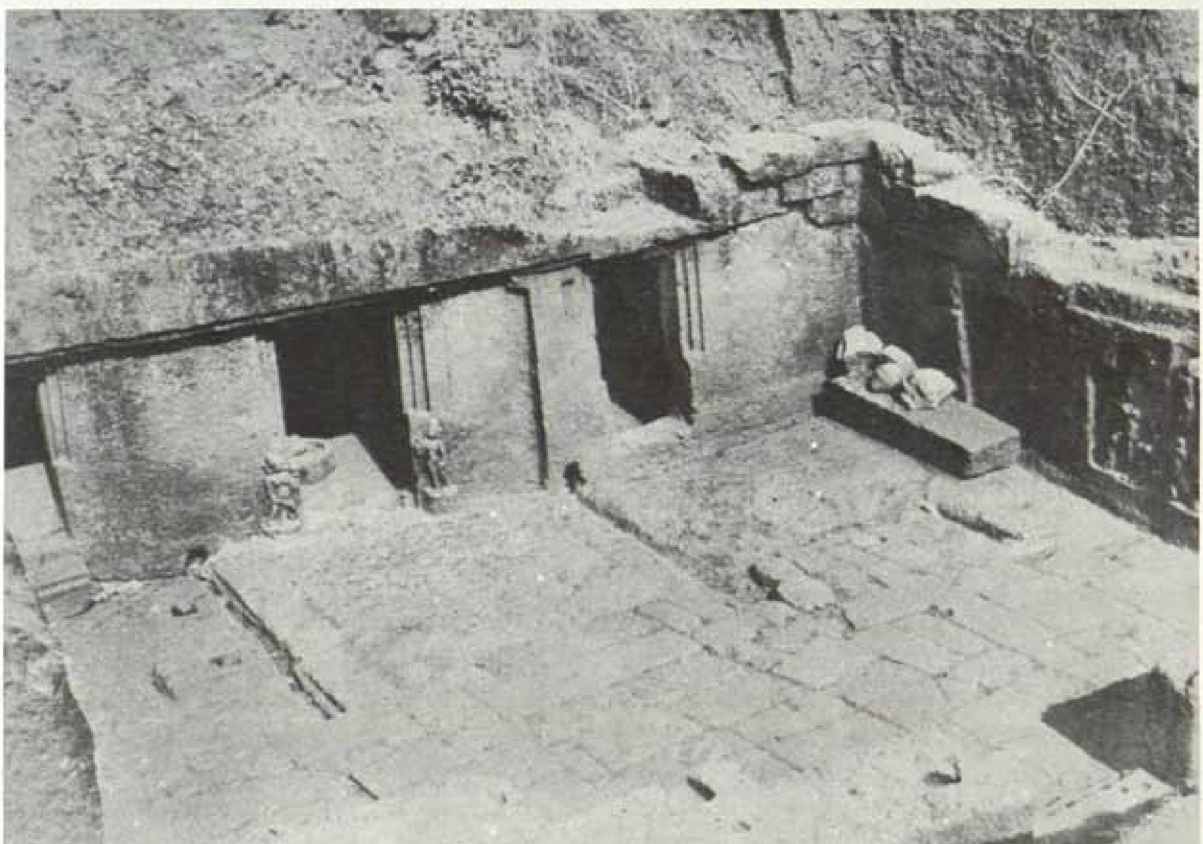
CAVE 27

This is a badly damaged cave. In its original form it could have had a plain entrance door-way flanked by an window opening , of which one in extant. The hall inside has a bench running around the eastern and the western wall, as also behind the front windows.

Behind the hall, a shrine was attempted but because of a wide fissure in the rock it was found necessary to insert masonry blocks to support the partition wall. The masonary

Plate 52. Panhale

Shrines opposite the entrance to the open court of cave 29.



supports are,however missing in part and the remaining wall is hanging on the western side. In the back wall of the hall, a plain door-way flanked by a large rectangular window opening leads to the interior shrine chamber.

This oblong chamber has a bench running along its back and side walls. In the centre of the back bench there is a platform on which the object of worship was intended to be kept.

There was a deep sloping fissure in the back wall. An attempt was made to collect the water issuing from this fissure in a rock-cut channel and let it out from both the sides into the front hall, and thereafter outside the cave by means of a covered drain.

CAVE 28

This is a small cell with a simple door opening and a low platform against the back wall opposite to the door-way for installing an image

Adjacent to it is another small cell of no architectural merit.

CAVE 29

This cave called Gaur *Lena* is isolated from the main group and lies on the other side of the hill in a locality called Bagwadi. It overlooks the stream called Dhakti, a tributary of Kotaji. In recent times, the cave had fallen into oblivion due to the accumulation of debris over it, and the area had come under cultivation. However, the survey number containing it, was traditionally designated as Gaur lena and as chance would have it, the plough-share revealed a hollow during ploughing operation. In the year 1973-74 the area was excavated by the State Department of Archaeology bringing to light this cave. The cave is of utmost importance in the history of religious art and architecture of Western India, on account of exceedingly important array of sculptured panels of Natha affiliation contained in it.

Entered from the west, through an opening and with a rock-cut wall on the northern side and a partly rock-cut and masonary wall on the south, the court-yard of the cave measuring 5.20m.x7.10m. is now open to sky. At one time, the court was covered by a wooden *mandapa* as can be surmised from the sockets appearing on the extant wall-tops. Opposite the entrance to the court and in the eastern rock face of the court are three rock-cut cells. (Plate 52 and 53). The entrance doorway of the central one is flanked, on each side by a river goddess Ganga and Yamuna.The goddess on the north side holds a small (*kalasa*) in her left hand while the other on the south is in a similar stance, but the *kalasa* held by her is missing. The cell (2 m. x 2.18 m) has no *lalata-bimba* and has two plain *dvarasakhas*. Inside is a *siva-linga* . Separated by a pilaster, there is similar cell(1.64m.x1.60m.)on the southern side, but without the river goddesses flanking its entrance. It has a plain *lalata-bimba*. Correspondingly, on the north side, in the same wall,is a cave (1.53m. x 1.65 m.) at a slightly higher level. It is bereft of any cult image and the height of the cell does not allow one to stand erect in it. It has plain *dvarasakhas* and the *lalata-bimba* is not carved.

On the northern face of the southern wall, there is a small rectangular niche adjoining a large sculptured panel(2.25m.x1.10m.). (Plate 54). The central figure in this panel is that of Ganesha. It is flanked by seated Saraswati (left side) and standing Lakshmi (right side). Ganesha is seated hold-

Plate 53. Panhale

Doorway of central shrine with river goddesses, in the courtyard of cave 29.



Plate 54. Panhale

Sculptured panel showing Ganesha flanked by Lakshmi and Saraswati carved on the dwarf wall opposite the entrance to Gaur *lėna*, cave 29.



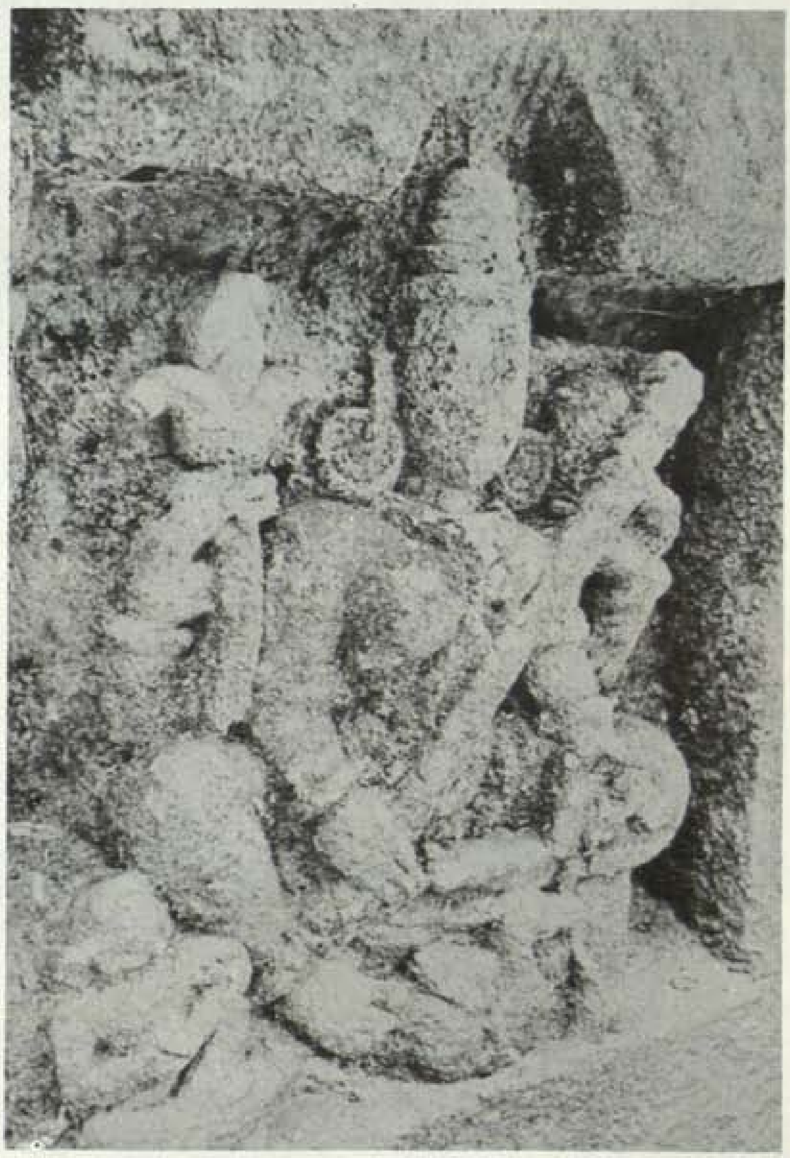


Plate 55. Panhale

Saraswati, closer view, cave 29.

ing an axe (*parasu*) and a broken tooth in his two right hands. He holds a lotus and a bowl containing sweets (*modaka patra*) in his two left hands. His trunk is turned towards his left and holds a *modaka* in it. He has tied his belly with a *udarbandha* and a snake is flung across his body in the *yajnopavita* fashion, its head and tail making a knot on his belly. He wears a *karanda-mukuta* with beaded bands on his head and wears wristlets and anklets. His mount, the mouse, is seated by the side of his right leg which is flexed in an upright position at the knee. His left leg is placed horizontally pressed against his stomach. The flanking female deities are placed each under a semicircular arch. Of these, Saraswati (Plate 55) is shown on a pedestal seated in *ardha-paryankasana* with her mount, swan placed sideways against the seat. She holds a lute (*vina*) across her body in the right lower and upper left hand. She also holds a lotus bud in her upper right hand and a palm–leaf manuscript in her lower left hand. She wears *karanda-mukuta, tatanka-cakra* as ear-rings, *graiveyaka* with a pendant falling between her breasts, armlets and wristlets. An attendant is seated to her right looking up towards her in veneration.

The figure of Lakshmi is shown standing in *samabhanga*.She holds a shield in her upper left hand and a bowl in her lower left. In the upper right hand she holds perhaps a sword which is now damaged. In the lower right a *cakra*, below which stands a male figure, perhaps indicating *cakra-purusa.* To her left, near her feet is seated *garuda* in human form in *anjali mudra* with the wings shown on his flanks.

The principal cave(2.80m. x 4.9m.) faces south and it has a doorway(1.46m. x 0.76m.) with a river goddess on either side within a pilastered *devakostha,* surmounted by *kutas.* (Plates 56 and 57) Each figure holds a *purnaghata* and stands with its face turned towards the doorway.The door has two plain *sakhas* and a pilaster indicated by a deep cut along its outer periphery.The *lalata-bimba* is plain.On the outer side of the door-sill there is a semicircular projection over a moulded base.There is a low bench on either side of the doorway. A loose image of cow with a calf(*savatsa dhenu*) is placed on it and projecting broad eaves cover the bench below.In the side wall, on the east, there are four rectangular perforations to admit light inside the cave.On the corresponding western side only two have been completed and the remaining two are unfinished.

Inside, the cave contains rows of sculptured panels on its wall surfaces. In the back wall facing the door and at the lower level is a large oblong panel with three figures, (Plates 58A, B & C) the principal one being that of Adinath (Siva) seated in *padmasana* with his right hand in *vyakhyana-mudra* and the left placed on his left knee. He has turned his face towards the central figure which is his spouse, Girija, portrayed sideways and seated in *anjali-mudra.* She wears a *Karanda-mukuta, tatankacakra, graiveyaka,* armlets, wristlets and anklets. Behind her, is carved the figure of Matsyendranatha who is shown seated in *anjali-mudra* on a fish with its scales schematically arranged. He wears matted locks, earrings, armlets, and wristlets. He has his ears pierced like a *kanaphata yogi* and wears a loin cloth and an *uttariya* which is slung across his left shoulder and the waist. In front of this image,on the raised rock-cut floor is carved an *ardhacandrasila* with a conch on either side.

The wall surface of the back wall has 29

Plate 56. Panhale

Entrance of Gaur *lena* (cave 29) with cow and calf (*savatsa dhenu)* near the doorway.

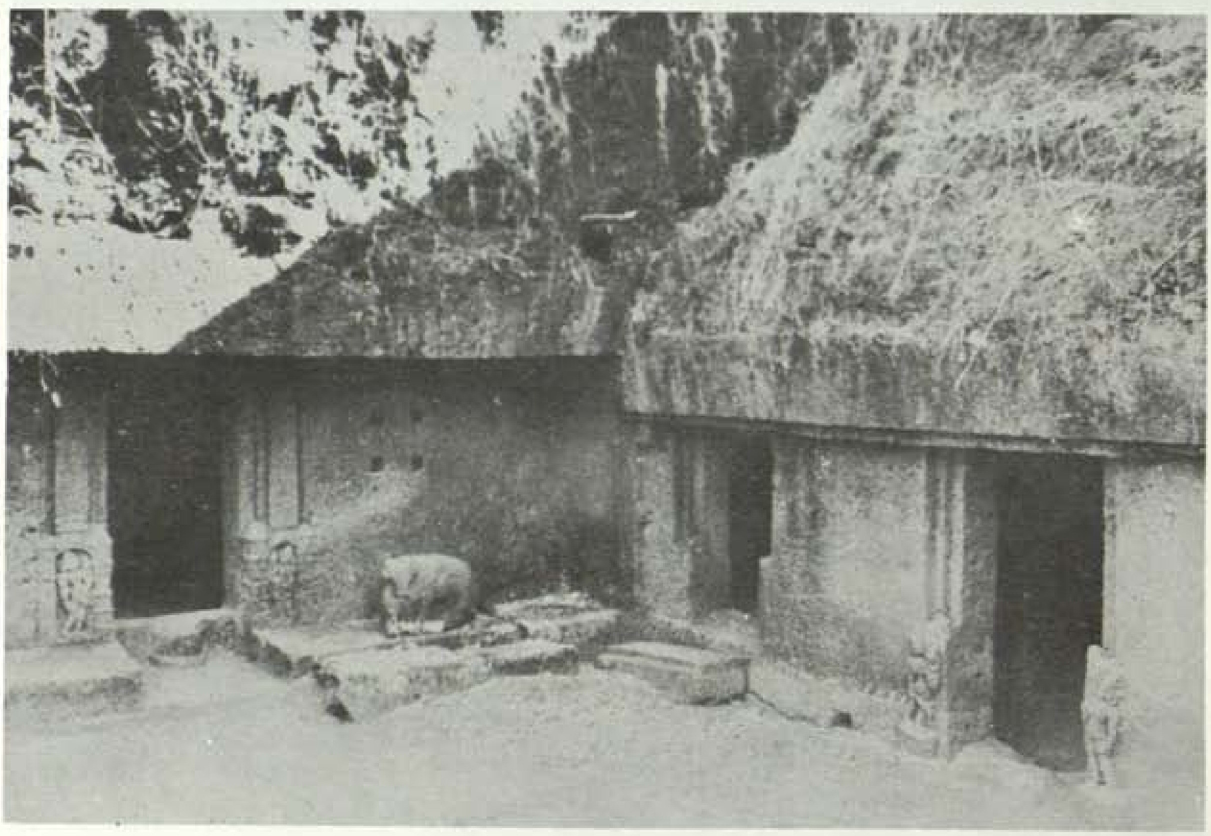


Plate 57. Panhale
Close-up of entrance, cave 29.

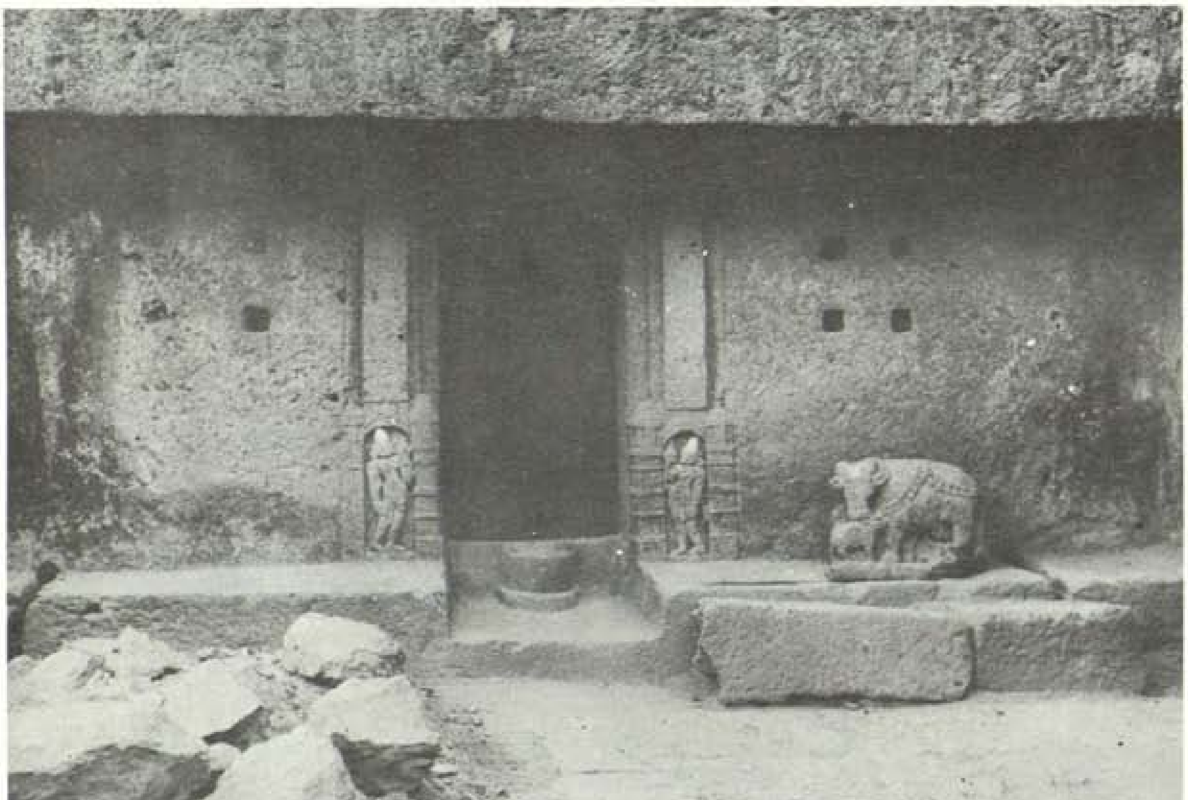




Plate 58A. Panhale

Natha *siddha* panels on the left side of the rear wall of cave 29.



Plate 58B Panhale

Natha *siddha* panels with the principal panel depicting Adinatha, Girija and Matsyendranath on a fish, carved on the rear wall of cave 29.

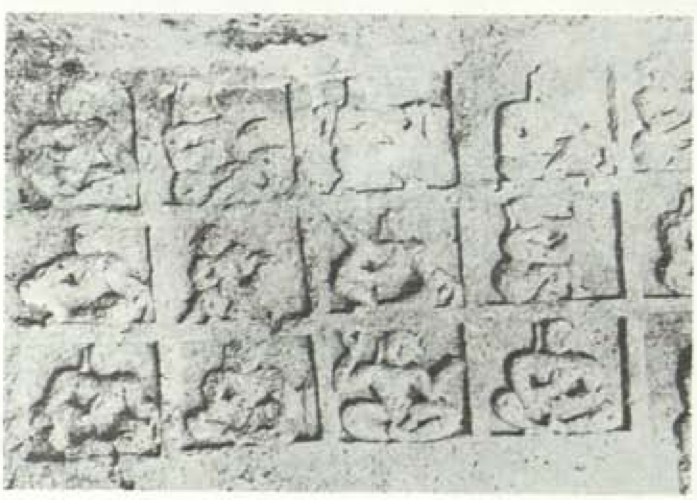


Plate 58C. Panhale

Rows of Natha *siddha* panels to the right of the principle panel, on the rear wall of cave 29.

Plate 59. Panhale
Natha *siddha* panels on the right wall together with Mahatripurasundari, cave 29.



Plate 60. Panhale

Natha *siddha* panels on the left wall together with Gorakshanatha in a large panel, cave 29.



compartments containing sculptured figures of Natha *siddhas*, in two rows, each containing eleven panels placed above the principal sculptured panel, besides, at lower level, there are four compartments on either side, of the principal panel. On the western and the eastern face of the wall there is one principal figure at lower level and rows of sculptures in smaller compartments.

Coming to the principal sculpture on the western wall we have an ascetic seated in *padmasana* (Plate 60) in the centre with heavy *jatabhara* over his head . Besides this principal figure sculpture, the wall surface has nineteen compartments, each depicting a Natha *siddha* . The main figure of the ascetic has his right hand is in *vyakhyana-mudra* and the left rests on the knee. He wears beaded armlets, and his ears are pierced and wears round *karna-kundalas.* He appears to be Goraksanatha who was responsible for propagating the Natha *pantha* in the length and breadth of India. This identification is confirmed by the loose image of the cow and calf outside and cave and referred to above. The name of Goraksnatha suggests either one who has controlled his senses *(go* meaning the five *indriyas* or sense organs) or he is the protector (*rakshaka*) of the cow (*go*).

On the opposite (eastern) wall surface is carved of a large panel a goddess (Plate 59) seated in *padmasana* holding in the upper right hand a bunch of five arrows, a goad (*ankusa*) in her right lower hand, while the left upper holds a sugarcane bow, and in the lower a noose (*pasa*). She has *karanda-mukuta* over her head and wears *tatankacakra, graiveyaka stanahara,* armlets, wristlets and anklets. The deity is identified as Lalita also called Tripura-sundari or Mahatripura-sundari. The Uttara-kand of *brahmanda-Purana* contains a chapter called *Shri Lalita sahastranama,* (thousand names of the goddess Lalita) and extrolls a deity called Lalita who is worshipped by followers of *Kaula, Daksina* and *Vama margis* as well. She is described in verse no. 2 and 3 of the *Sahastranama* as follows:

Udyad-bhānu-sahasrābhā chaturbāhu—
samanvitā
rāga-svarūpa-pāśādhyā krodhākāṁkuśo-
jjvalā
manorupekṣu-kodandā pañca-tanmātra-
sāyakā
nijāruṇa-prabhā-pūra-majjad-brahmā-
ṇḍa-maṇḍalā

She shines with the brilliance of a thousand rising suns, has four arms, holds in the right upper hand the noose representing her love towards her devotees and shines with a goad in the upper left hand (symbolising her wrath) to spurn her devotees towards right conduct. In her left hand she has the sugarcane bow symbolising the *samkalpa* (power of desire of the mind) which creates the phenomenal universe. She is also said to be born from the pot of the fire of consciousness.

In *Soundarya-lahari,* a work traditionally attributed to Sankaracharya (although Prof. Norman Brown considers it a later composition) Lalita is described as follows:

Kaṇat-kānchi-dāma karikalabha-kum-
bha-stana-natā
parikṣinā madhye pariṇata sarcchandra-
vadanā
dhanur-bāṇan-pāsam Śrunimapi-dadhānā
karatalaih
purastād-āstam nah puram-athiturah prusikā

"She wears a golden waist-band which makes sweet noise (by the tinkling of the bells attached to it). She is bent low by the weight

of her pitcher like breasts resembling the trunk of a young elephant. She has slender waist and her face is like the orb of the clear brilliant autumnal moon. She holds in her hands bow, arrow, noose, and goad and that such a deity who engenders pride in the heart of Siva, the destroyer of Tripurasura may appear before us in her *saguna* from."

In the *sodasi Tantra,* sodasi is identified with Tripura-sundari. She is described at having four arms holding a noose an elephant goad, an arrow and a bow.

Tripura was worshipped by *Sakta* and *Natha-panthi yogis,* the latter are also called *Avadhutas.* She is also mentioned among the ten *mahavidyas* : Matangi, Bhuvanesvari, Bagala, Dhumavati, Tara, Chinnasirodhara, Bhagavati, Shyama, Rama and Sundari (or Lalita Sundari).

In the *Sakta* and Natha *sampradaya* the worship of Siva with Sakti is of singular importance, She is conceived as inseparably united with Siva and only in this state of union Siva can manifest his power. In the *Siddha-Siddhanta Paddhati,* Goraksanath describes the eternal union between Siva and Sakti as :

> *Śivasya abhyantare Śaktih 'Śakter abhyantare Śivah antaram naiva jāniyāt candra-candrakalor wa.*

Sakti is immanent in Siva, and Siva is immanent in Sakti, see no difference between the two, as between the moon and the moon-light."

Her worship is supposed to bestow both material prosperity and *moksha*. In *Soundarya-Lahari* the *vidyas* are divided as *hadis* and *kadi,* the former, as bestowing liberation and the latter material prosperity. But the worship of Lalita is said to bestow both material and spiritual prosperity.

> *Yatrāsti bhogo na hi tatra mokṣo*
> *Yatrāsti mokṣo na hi tatra bhogaḥ*
> *Srisundarī-pūjana-tatparāṇam*
> *bhogaccha moksaccha karastha eva*

Lalita is also worshipped in the form of a diagram called *sricakra* which is considered her external manifestation (Page 6). The *cakra* is carved on a plate of gold or copper. The worship of the *cakra* is intimately connected with *kundilini yoga* and Lalita is supposed to reside in *visuddhicakra* surrounded by sixteen *saktis.* Natha *yogis* believe in *kundiliniyoga sadhana* and therefore her image finds a place in this cave.

Coming back to the small panels of Nath *siddhas,* we find that on the inner wall surface, on either side of the doorway there are nine panels each depicting a *Siddha,* there in each of the three rows. (Plates 61 & 65). The total number of small panels depicting the siddhas carved on the wall of Gaur Lena adds up to eighty five. There are disposed as follows:

Southern Wall, leftside	: Panels 1 to 9 (3 in each of the three rows)
Eastern wall	: panels 18 to 28
Northern wall	: panels 29 to 57
Western wall	: Panels 58 to 76
Southern wall, right side	: Panels 77 to 85 (3 in each of the three rows)

Of these panels (no.67 and 68), the former showing a *Siddha* on an elephant followed by an attendant holding a goad (*ankusa*) in the latter, appear to be one subject. Thus the total number of *Siddha* panels add up to 84 and therefore appear to portray the eighty-four *Siddhas* venerated both by the

Plate 61. Panhale

Natha *siddha* panels on the inner side of right wall, cave 29.

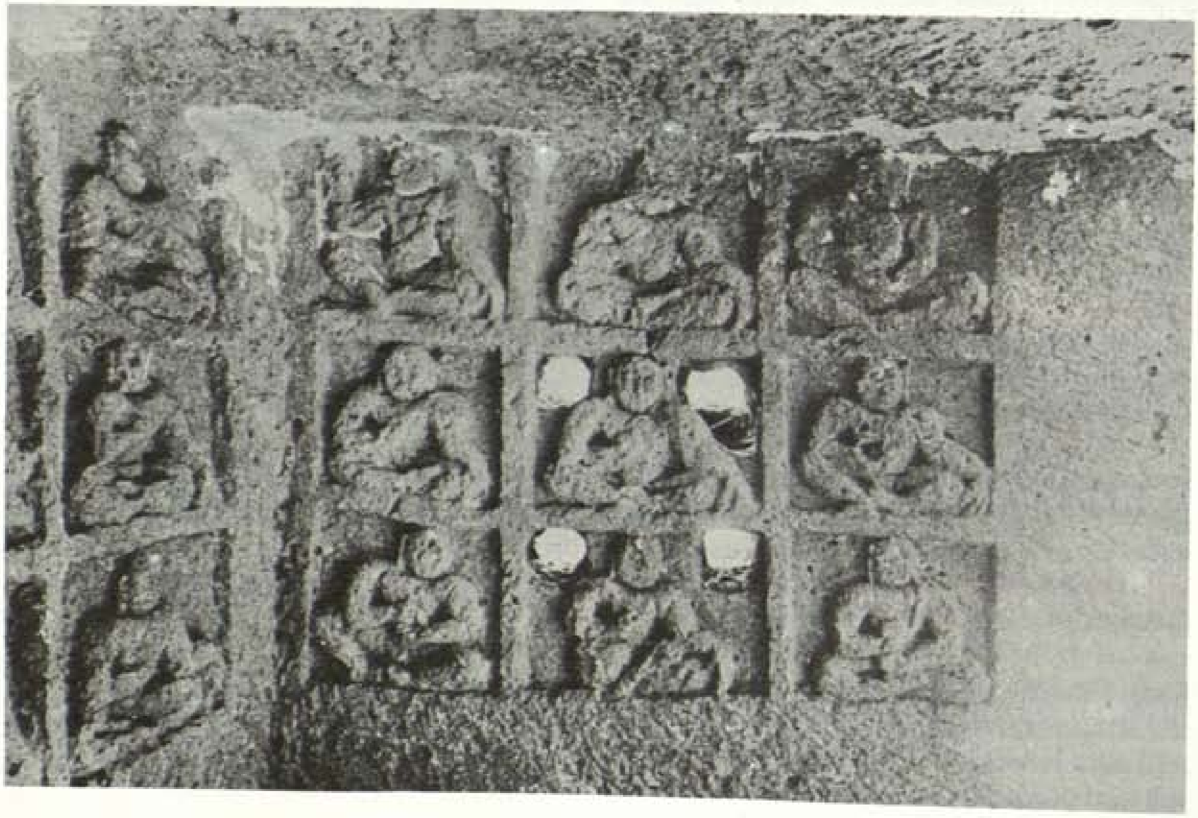


Plate 62. Panhale

Natha *siddha* panels on the inner side of left wall, cave 29.



Vajrayana and Natha followers. At Panhale it appears, that the eighty-four siddhas of Natha tradition have been portrayed as the cave is specially affiliated to the Naṭha *sampradaya.*

It is difficult to identify all these 84 Siddhas individually because there is no unanimity in the various lists of Siddhas preserved in various Natha *maths.* The siddhas are claimed by Vajrayani Buddhists, Saivas, Maheswaras and finally by the Natha *Panthis.* In the 14th century when the religious devotees of Nath *sampradaya* tried to portray these Siddhas, an attempt was made to differentiate one siddha from the other by some identification mark or attribute connected with the name,profession,or the miracles associated with some of them. Thus we can identify some of the *Siddhas* as follows:

1.	Sakula Hamsanatha, Carrying *hamsa* (swan)	Panel 20 and Panel 66
2.	Goraksantha, driving cows	Panel 29
3.	Chouranginatha (with this severed hands and feet)	Panel 30
4.	Vajraghantapada , carrying a bell ghanta in his hands	Panel 33
5.	Halipa, carrying *hala* (plough)	Panel 37
6.	Siyalpa, riding a jackal	Panel 49
7.	Veenapa, holding lute *(veena)*	Panel 72
8.	Dandapa,holding a *danda*(staff)	Panel 73

In respect of Chouranginatha there is a very popular legend. It is said that Chaurangi-natha a prince by birth had incurred the wrath of his step-mother because he did not succumb to her amourous advances and as a result,his hands and feet were cut off by his father who believed the false report of the queen. In the panel he is shown with his restored limbs together with the severed hands and feet. Panel no. 35 depicts a *siddha* embracing a woman. He could be a Siddha following the *kaula marg.* (A descriptive list of the 85 panels is attached at the end of this chapter.)

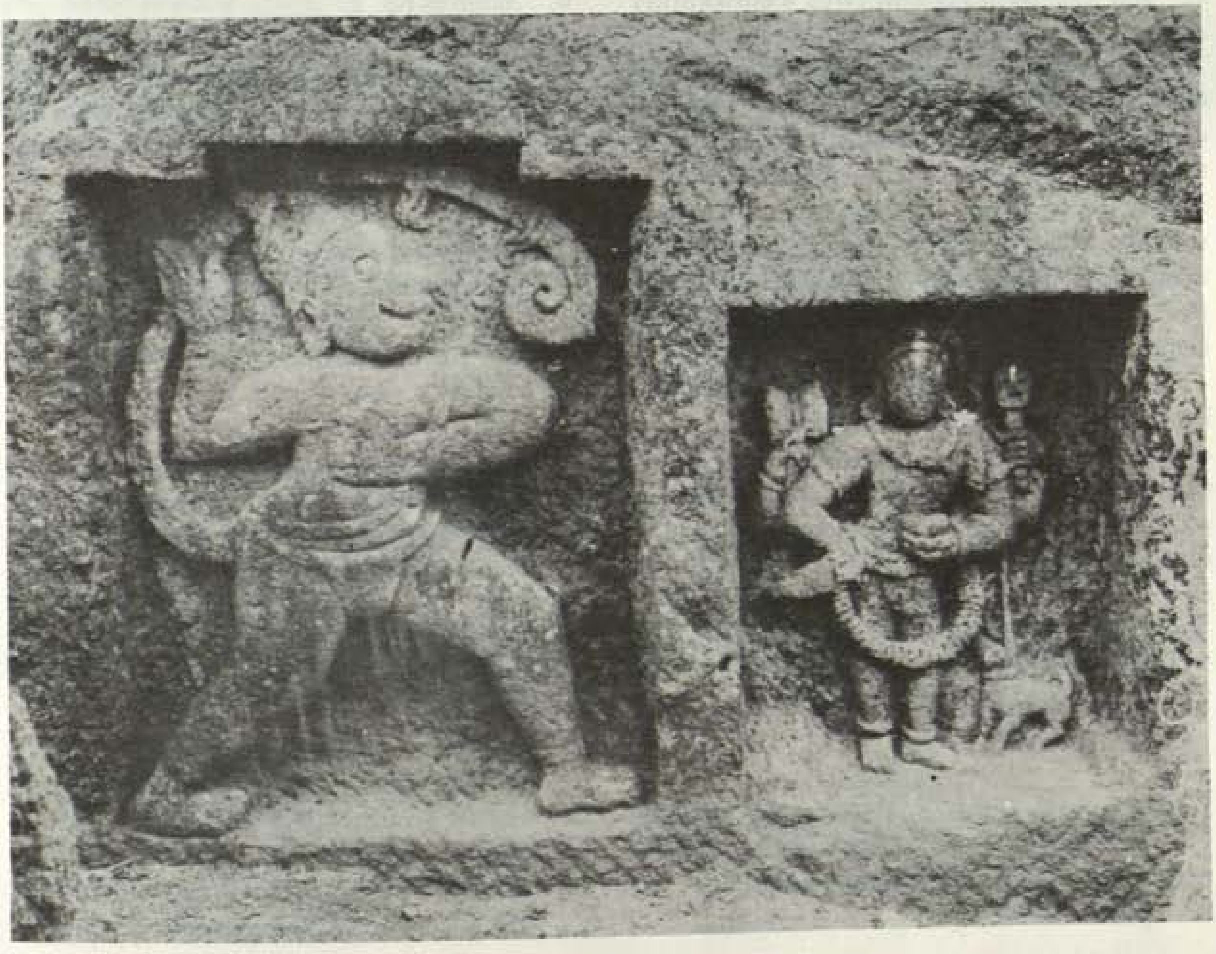
Outside the cave, almost opposite the entrance to the court but placed slightly towards the north is a rock-cut rectangular block about one meter in height and .78 meter square at the top. It has a 15 cm. wide band running in the middle with a lozenge shaped decoration in the centre. This may have been used for placing some emblem of the Natha *pantha* or may be a lampost. The other possibility is that it was a *balipitha* forming part of the *sakta* practice and the cave may have originally been a *sakta* cave. Outside the cave there is an unfinished tank with live but feeble spring of water. Close by on the rock surface, facing south, are carved, in two compartments, sculptures of Bhairava and Hanmana.

The worship of Bhairava percolated in the *Natha sampradaya* as a symbol of complete detachment and asceticism. This must have happened with the absorption of some Kapalika *Siddhas* in the Natha *sampradaya.* The worship of Bhairava which was in vogue among the Kapalikas appears to have found favour with the Natha followers. The image of Bhairava (Plate 63) is frontal and he holds a *damaru* and a dagger in his two right hands and *Khatvanga* and *brahma-kapala* in his two left hands. He wears a *rundamala* and a short garland of snakes, wristlets, anklets,armlet, ear-rings and a curly wig-like head gear. A dog tied to a string stands by his side.

In the neighbouring compartment is carved the monkey faced god Hanumana.

Plate 63. Panhale

Hanumana and Bhairava, outside cave 29 near rock-cut water spring.



(Plate 68) as a symbol of a celebate *yogi*. He is celebrated as the devotee of Rama, hero of the epic, *Ramayana*. He is shown moving sideways towards one side with his tail curled up over his head almost framing the figure. His right hand is flexed at the elbow in the attitude of striking the enemy showing his *vira-bhava* while the left arm, horizontally disposed, shows his clenched fist pressed against the chest. He wears a *karanda-mukuta, yajnopavita* and a loin cloth. The figure is crudely cut but is full of vigour. It can be assigned to the same period as the crudely cut sculptures in this cave and can be placed in *circa* 14th century A.D.

A significant point that came to our notice was that below the panel of Matsyendranatha, Girija and Adinath, there is a separate platform with a mortise for setting up an image. It is likely that the original image enshrined in the cave was removed and the cave appropriated by followers of Natha *Pantha*, when the sculptures of the Siddhas came to be carved therein.

The sculpture of Ganesha and the flanking images of Lakshmi and Saraswati in the eastern wall of the court can be assigned to the 12th or 13th century and it is not unlikely that they formed part and parcel of the original layout of the cave, before the cave came in the possession of the Nathas.

CAVE 29 (Gaur Lena)
* SIDDHA PANELS

Panels on the Southern (left) wall : (1 to 9)

1. *Siddha,* frontal is *padmasana, dhyana mudra,* with right hand over the left placed in the lap.
2. *Siddha*, frontal in *padmasana,* with right hand in *vyakhyana-mudra* and left hand touching the ground along the knee.
3. *Siddha,* frontal but head turned towards right, in *savya-lalitasana,* right elbow resting on knee and the palm in *abhaya mudra* and left hand touching the ground along the knee.
4. *Siddha,* frontal but looking sideways, in *sukhasana,* right hand in *vyakhyana mudra* and left touching ground along the knee (as in no. 2).
5. Same as no. 2.
6. Same as no. 2.
7. Same as no. 1 but in *buddha padmasana*
8. *Siddha,* seated sideways in *ardha-matsyendrasana* with left leg crossed over the right thigh; right hand in *vyakhyana mudra* and left hand touching the ground.
9. *Siddha* with his left leg flexed and placed horizontally and the right leg flexed at the knee placed vertically with right hand over the palm and the left resting against the chest.
10. Same as no. 2.
11. Same as no. 2 but face towards left.
12. Same as no. 4.
13. *Siddha* in *padmasana,* right hand holding a mace across the chest and left hand touching ground along the knee.
14. *Siddha,* with right hand in *vyakhyana mudra*; left knee raised up and left hand resting on it.
15. *Siddha* with face turned towards the left, holding a fly whisk and left hand touching the ground along the knee.
16. Standing *Siddha,* with left leg forward; holding some object in both hands in the attitude on placing it on a rectang-

ular pedestal.
17. Same as no. 2.
18. *Siddha* seated sideways and using blow pipe to ignite fire in a *kundika.* (*raseswara Siddha?*)
19. *Siddha* seated like no. 8 addressing a disciple standing in front in *anjali mudra.*
20. Seated in *padmasana,* right hand in *vyakhyana mudra* with a swan perched on the open palm (Sukulhamsa-Natha?)
21. Same as no. 2
22. Same as no. 2 but holding a club in the right hand.
23. Same as no. 2.
24. Same as no. 2.
25. Same as no. 23.
26. Same as no. 2.
27. Same as no. 4.
28. Seated in *padamasana* with both the hands resting on the knee.

Panels on the northern wall (29 to 57).

29. Standing *Siddha* with a staff in right hand and left hand raised to drive a cow in front, Gorakhnath (?).
30. Chauranginath in *padmasana* and *vyakhyana mudra* with severed hands and feet separately shown respectively above the shoulders and near the knees.
31. *Siddha* in *sukhasana* in *vyakhyana mudra.*
32. *Siddha* in *sukhasana,* looking sideways, with a box resting or the thigh and right holding a lotus or stylus.
33. *Siddha* walking to his right with a stick in the right hand and *khappara* or *kapala* in the left, (jalandharanatha?).
34. *Siddha* walking to his left with an indeterminate animal along with him.
35. A *yogi* and *yogini* in *ardhalingana* posture. The lady holds the *dhoti* of the male by her right hand and her own garment by the left *(kaulamargi?).*
36. *Siddha* in *ardha matsyendrasana,* looking sideways.
37. *Siddha* walking with a plough on the shoulder (Halipa?).
38. *Siddha* seated with his left foot over his flexed right.
39. Same as no. 4.
40. *Siddha* with left leg flexed, right hand in *vyakhyana-mudra* left hand resting on the knee. Above the left hand an animal is shown in a running posture.
41. *Siddha* seated with right leg flexed diagonally, right hand in *vyakhyana-mudra* and left touching the ground on the knee.
42. *Siddha* walking with a bell in the right hand flexed at the elbow. (Vajra-ghanta-pada?).
43. A male figure in running posture as if following the one as in no. 4.
44. *Siddha* seated with left leg over the flexed right leg, right hand in *vyakhyana mudra* and left holding an object. On the opposite side is a tripod with a book over it.
45. Same as no. 4.
46. *Siddha* in *padmasana* and *dhyana mudra.*
47 *Siddha* seated in a crouched posture looking side way and blowing a pipe.
48. *Siddha* holding a staff in the right hand and left hand touching the earth along the knee (Dandanatha?).
49. *Siddha* riding a jackal (Siyalpa?).
50. Same as no. 3.
51. *Siddha* in *padmasana* and in *vyakhyana mudra.*

52. *Siddha* seated with a disc in the right hand.
53. *Siddha* seated with the right hand resting on the leg and the left hand on the knee.
54. Same as no. 9.
55. *Siddha* seated, looking side ways, right hand raised up, left holding some object.
56. Damaged but like no. 3.
57. Same as no. 2.

Panels on the western wall (58 to 76).

58. Same as no. 2.
59. *Siddha* in *ardha-matsyendrasana* (damaged).
60. Shows a woman suckling a child which seems to have been handed over to her by the man standing in front with another figure behind him, perhaps a lady.
61. Shows a woman with her left leg raised, being worshipped by a person standing in front with flowers. Behind the woman is a person in *anjali mudra.*

(60 and 61 appear to be scenes from a story of some Natha Siddha).

62. A man seated with a female figure offe-ring him something like a disc indica-ting sun over the head.
63. Same as no. 2.
64. A figure blowing an instrument with a another figure in front (badly worn out).
65. A man holding another figure by the hair and stamping his foot on the latters belly. The man holds some objects in the right hand.
66. Same as no. 20 (Sukula hamsa natha?).
67. A man riding on elephant with his left hand stretched forward.
68. A man walking with an *ankusa* in hand, behind the elephant as in no.67 (nos.67 &68 together form one panel.
69. Same as no. 2.
70. Same as no. 2.
71. A man in the action of hitting a person climbing a tree.
72. A *Siddha* playing on *vina*, looking sideways (vinapa?).
73. *Siddha* walking with a stick (Dandapa?)
74. Same as no. 2.
75. *Siddha* in *ardhamatsyendrasana.*
76. Same as no. 2.

(Panels on Southern wall (right side, 77 to 85)

77. Same as no. 2.
78. Same as no. 2.
79. *Siddha* in *ardhamatsyendrasana.*
80. *Siddha* in flying posture looking behind.
81. Same as no. 2.
82. Same as no. 2 but with right knee raised up.
83. Same as no. 2.
84. Same as no. 2.
85. Same as no. 1.

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1. Such a stone screen exists also in cave 17. The idea of providing such windows on either side of the doorway is observed at Nasik in the Gautamputra Vihara, and is a logical development of the old practice of providing small perforated rock-cut windows to monk-cells.

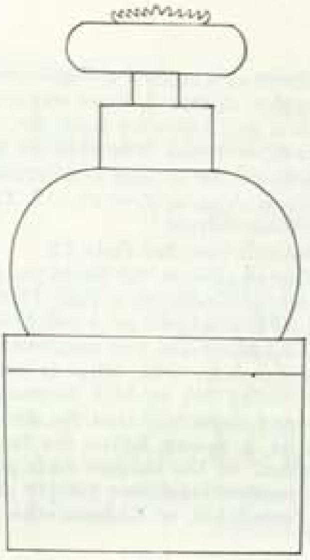
2. Caves 1, 2, & 3 were probably carved as a unified architectural composition. It is not unlikely that corresponding to cave 3 which is at right angles to cave 2, there was a cave (with the present open platform forming its floor). and it was provided with a side entrance from the east. Later this cave was knocked out and the present cave 1 excavated into the (southern) wall following the alignment of cave 2.

3. Such imitation of wooden members on the ceiling is met with in the early Hinayana caves at Kondane, Pitalkhora as also in the Mahayana caves at Ajanta, cave no. 17. The Visvakarma cave at Ellora (cir. 8th cent. A.D.) also shows similar imitation of wooden rafters.

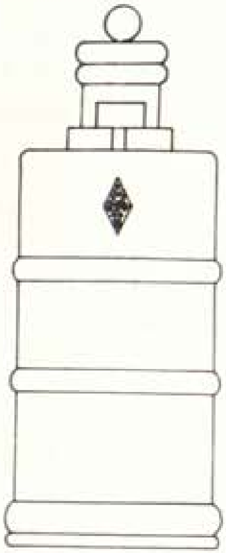
4. *The way of the Buddha*, Pub. Division 1956. See Plate 22.

5. In this context, it may be mentioned that at the Buddhist caves at Kondivte, small votive *stupa* were installed on the roof top. These *stupas* are ascribable to c. 10th-11th cent. A.D.

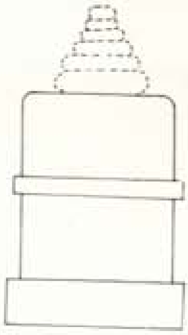
6. The depiction has some parallel with a subject on a pillar, in two registers. in the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal, This temple dedicated to Lokeswara was constructed by the chief queen of Vikramaditya, II Lokamahadevi a Haihaiya Princess around A.D. 740. What is most important is that the last panel of this depiction (plate 7D of *Kiratarjuniya in Indian Art*, by M.S. Nagaraja Rao), of four huts is almost similar to the one at Panhale Kaji. However, there is one departure that the demon Mukadanav is shown emerging from the body of the boar while at Pattadakal he is shown below the feet of the boar. As regards the central panel there is a very close parallel to a depiction of the subject with that on four pillars ascribable to Rashtrakuta times, reused in the construction of a modern Hanuman temple at Kadur. (p. 28 pl. XIC). The depiction of this subject is, however, not vivid as at Pattadakal, or Kailasanatha cave, at Ellora.



Stupa in Relief
Panhale Kaji,Cave no-5



Stupa from
Panhale Kaji



Stupa, from
Panhale Kaji

4

Chronology of Praṇālaka Caves

CHRONOLOGY OF THE PRAṆĀLAKA CAVES

The Panhale caves ranging in date from *circa* 3rd century to 14th century A.D. present a variety of problems in arriving at the sequence of individual caves in the total chronological framework of the group. There is hardly any adequate inscriptional data to date a cave with certainty. The architectural features of most of the caves were interfered with during later periods, not only by extension of caves or addition of new features, but in some cases old features, including inscriptions, were ruthlessly obliterated sometimes beyond recognition. However, these very factors partially come to our help in fixing the chronology of the caves, although, this is a very demanding (yet absorbing) task as the nook and corner of every cave has to be carefully examined to detect later structural interpolations, obliterations or changes. Another useful factor in this regard is the changing pattern of religious worship necessitating installation of new images in the caves consistent with the new faith. Lastly, the diversity of architectural features and modification of plastic art style also help in fixing relative chronology of the caves in the group. All these factors have been taken into consideration in arriving at the relative chronology of the caves in the group.

In cave 6, on the western wall of the verandah, there was once a *brahmi* inscription which has been almost entirely obliterated excepting a few letters which are still discernible and from the palaeography of which one can judge the date of the cave as *circa* 3rd cent. A.D. The letters providing such a clue are the *brahmi* letters *"sa"* and *"ma"* (Plate 16). On the façade of cave 5, there is an extremely plain surface suggestive of the possibility that this portion was prepared for engraving an inscription but, if it was ever engraved, it has been so completely removed by chiselling that hardly any letter can be made out. This cave which was originally a small cell, contains on the inner wall of the cave, a representation of a *stupa* in relief (Plate 9) which, although scraped, has escaped total destruction and one can clearly see its outline. From the architectural features of this *stupa*, the cave can be attributed to *circa* 3rd cent. A.D. This *stupa* in low relief, has a *vedika* band above the top of the drum, but it is left uncarved. There is a roundish *anda* (drum) with an octagonal *yasti* on top capped by a *harmika* decorated with a lotus design. This *stupa* can be compared with a similar representation of a *stupa* also carved in *ulto relievo* fashion in a cave at chaul (Hinglajmata group) and on the strength of the similarity of architectural features, the cave can be assigned to *circa* 3rd cent. A.D., like, the adjacent cave no. 6 which contained the obliterated inscription referred to above. However, in *circa* 10th cent. A.D., both these caves, like many others were appropriated for Vajrayana worship. This is very patently clear in cave 6 where, in the *garbha-griha* was placed an image of Aksobhya (Plate 15) which, broken into parts, is still lying in the hall

of the cave. Although its head and hands are missing , the torso with its double lotus seat bearing a horizontal *vajra* , reflects the style of the 10th cent. A.D. and helps in recognising the image as that of Aksobhya, a *dhyani* Buddha of the (Tantric Vajrayana-pantheon. He is shown in *bhumisparsa-mudra* as required by iconographic norms and one can clearly notice the right hand on the knee in the attitude of touching the earth and the left placed on the lap. The cave however, was originally meant to be a *vihara* with cells for monks but the cell opposite the entrance was enlarged and turned into a shrine and in this transformed condition, enshrined the image of Aksobhya. Thus, cave 6 with the verandah having octagonal pillars rising from the parapet, the astylar hall with bench along the wall and two window openings, one each on either side of the entrance, appear to precede the Vakataka *vihara* type at Ajanta and can be placed to *circa* 3rd cent. A.D. It appears that in the 10th cent. when this early *vihara* was reused for Vajrayana worship, the two armed capitals of the pillars were modified with a volute and *nagabandha* and the cave turned into a shrine of Aksobhya. It appears that the *stupa* now lying in the forecourt, decorated with four floral lozenge-shaped designs on its drum was placed opposite the entrance. The door-sill of the hall was simultaneously modified with the decoration of similar floral lozenge-shaped designs. Further on the top of the caves 5 and 6, the roof was relaid with slabs with a masonry revetment wall at the rear end and a special arrangement for placing a loose rock-cut *stupa* on the cave-top, of which a clear socket with a mortise hole has been noticed. Another *stupa* found in the forecourt of cave 5 has a tenon and circumference which fits in correctly with the measurements of the mortise and the round base carved on the rock (Plate 10). This arrangement of placing *stupas* in the forecourt and on the top of the caves appears to have been practised under Vajrayana influence and we have similar instances at Kondivte, Kanheri and Pale.[1]

Cave 4 which is similar to cave 5, also was used in the 10th century to house an image of Aksobhya. A loose image of this deity was found outside the cave in the verandah when initial clearance work was undertaken by the State Department of Archaeology. In cave 8, which was meant originally to be a small *bhikshu-griha*, a *garbha-griha* was added and the latter contains the lower portion of an image of Aksobhya. It will thus be seen, that caves 4, 6 and 8 were all transformed into Aksobhya shrines. Cave 5 which contains the old Hinayana *stupa* was also enlarged by the addition of a *garbha-griha* and the hall was widened on the west but what image was placed in the *garbha-griha* cannot be made out in the absence of any clue.

It appears that the groups consisting of caves 4 to 6 and 7 to 9, the latter not far removed in date from the former, appear to be the oldest core of the entire cave group. These caves have a common drainage system on the roof top. To the west of the group and in its continuation are caves 10 to 13. These caves appear to be a shade later than the former two groups but were modified and brought to their present form in *circa* 10th cent. A.D. Of this latter group, cave 10 is of some importance as it contains the image of Mahacandarosana (Plate 20) in a niche carved in the back wall and one

can attribute this image to *circa* tenth century A.D. on the basis of its style which corresponds with late Chalukyan idiom. The adjacent caves 9 and 11 were probably small *bhiksu-grihas* with beds for monks but were enlarged and each provided with a niche, one with a roundish or cusped top set within a rectangular one,and was meant to enshrine some image of Vajrayana pantheon, like that in cave no. 10

Cave 12 like its counterpart, cave 6, is a large cave with a tall rock-cut *stupa* placed on a low *adhisthana* in the forecourt (Plate 22). The cave has a façade similar to cave 62 but, instead of a single hall behind the verandah,it has three cells in a line,the central one being the principle shrine meant perhaps for housing an image of Aksobhya. This entire cave may have been carved in the 10th cent. A.D. and may not be an extension or modification of an earlier cave. The only other possibility could be that only the façade of the cave and the verandah were carved in late Hinayana phase and the three cells added later in the tenth century during Vajrayana occupation. Cave 13 which is contiguous to cave 12 may also belong to the same period.

Before we turn to cave 12 and beyond, let us take into account caves 1, 2 and 3 which are situated at the eastern end of the cave group (Plate 4).These three caves appear to be one unitary composition , although it has undergone some changes. Caves 2, of this group is the principal cave and its façade resembles that of cave 6 in having two octagonal pillars resting on the parapet and forming a wide entrance to the verandah which leads to an astylar hall which is provided with two large window openings, one each on either side of the entrance. This hall has the distinction of having in the ceiling, nearer the entrance, sixteen sunk squares (Plate 15) fashioned by carving out cross lintels, a feature which is absent in any other cave at Panhale . This reminds us of the earlier tradition of imitating wooden rafters on the ceiling. The cave further has a bench all along the interior walls, a feature present in Kondivte and Kanheri caves of *circa* 4th and 5th cent. A.D. It appears that this cave begun in *circa* 4th cent. A.D. was later transformed into a shrine although no image of the deity has been found in close proximity of the cave. However, on the left side of the *garbha-griha,* an attempt has been made to carve a panel containing seven standing *manushi* Buddhas (Plate 6) a feature suggestive of the transformation of the cave during Vajrayana occupations. The cells forming cave 1 and 2 and the one in the verandah of cave 2 were added later in 10th cent. A.D. Each one of these cells contains a niche within a niche, the inner one with a rounded top set within the outer one with a rectangular profile. It is very likely that cave 1 was originally at right angles with cave 2, corresponding with cave 3 but it was done away with and the present cave 1 was carved alongside cave no. 2. There are enough indications to postulate the existence of a cave on the raised court opposite cave 3.

The *garbha-griha* of cave 2 contains a large platform for placing the cult image. It is likely that the large *adhisthana* ((Plates 77A & B) with elephant and lion sculptures flanking the *dharma-chakra* and the two deer motif now used for placing the image of Zolai, the village deity,in a modern shrine on the top of the hill, may have been removed from this cave. It is not unlikely

that this cave originally contained an image of Buddha in *bhumisparsha mudra.* The image has been irretrievably lost, although its *adhisthana* (which can be dated to *circa* 10th cent. A.D.) has been reused in *circa* 18th cent. for the village deity which is no other than Mahisasuramardini.

Cave 13 , which is some distance away from the previous group of caves 4 to 12 is one with some distinguishing features. This cave is at a slightly higher level and its court is approached by a broad flight of steps. The court has two side benches and a loose *vedi* having cult representation of footprints *(paduka)*. The entrance doorway has a *lalata-bimba* carved with an inset image of Ganesh, evidently suggesting that originally the *lalata-bimba* was plain as in the case of all preceding caves. Further, on either side of the doorway are compartments containing sculptured panels of Nath *Siddhas* all cut in, as a later thought, and are flush with the wall surface. Inside, there is an oblong hall with a deep niche at the back, again containing some sculptured panels of Natha affiliation leaving sufficient space for the central cult image which is not in position. It will be seen from the description of the cave chapter 3 (see pages 59–62) that all the sculptured panels here represent subjects pertaining to Nath *Sampradaya* and these can be attributed to *circa* 13th cent. A.D. However, the cave appears to have been originally carved in the late Hinayana period as a *bhikshu-griha*. It was later enlarged during Vajrayana occupation and subsequently appropriated by the Nathas after the cave group was abandoned by the Tantric Vajrayana Buddhists. The only clue suggesting the use of the cave by the Vajrayana followers is the one time plain *lalata-bimba* , which during Natha occupation was carved with Ganesha It is quite likely that during the Natha occupation, the cave contained an image of Gorakhnatha, a loose image, unfortunately without the head,but ansering the inconographic features of Gorakhnatha has been traced and identified among the loose images collected and kept in cave 17 by the State Department of Archaeology when the cave and their precincts were excavated by them (see chapter 5 and Pl. 74). The cave thus was used in the 13th century by the followers of the Natha *Sampradaya,* although it is much older.

Further separated by some distance is cave 15 , which clearly reveals its occupation by followers of brahmanical (Saiva) faith after it was abandoned by the Vajrayana Buddhists. The cave has a small open court with rock-cut beds along the side walls. Further there is a cut in niche for Ganesha to the east of the entrance and a cut-out rectangular niche to the west and the *lalata-bimba* carries Ganesha indicating that the old façade was altered to carve out the niches. Inside, the cave has, on either side, two sunk pits, partly structural and partly rock-cut , probably meant to keep valuables and with an arrangement for covering these with wooden planks and segregating them with wooden partitions. Inside, there is a small *garbha-griha* without any cult image.

Cave 16 appears to be an excavation of Vajrayana phase but because its roof, immediately above the façade , had decayed and fallen the cave was not used during brahmanical occupation , although some effort was made to construct a structural shrine close by and probably meant for Saiva worship. A small roofless cave

near by also appears to be a later brahmanical addition.

Cave 17, is again an important cave as it retains a few architectural features not met with in other caves. The façade of this cave, is by and large, similar to caves 2, 6 and 12 in having two octagonal pillars on the parapet together with a pilaster at either end. What is interesting is that the perforated screens, made of stone, are in position in the window flanking the entrance, thereby giving us an idea of how the windows in cave 2 and 6 may have been fitted with stone grill. Inside the hall, alongside the walls, on either side, are carved two pilasters dividing the hall into three bays. This feature again is suggestive of the wooden prototype of a temple hall. This cave has a *garbha-griha* but is without any image. It appears that originally the cave was excavated in *circa* 10th century A.D. and later used for the worship of some brahmanical cult-image. The brief report in Indian Express (*vide* page 4) mentions that brahmanical images of Ganesha, Bhairava and a goddess were found in this cave.

Caves 18, 19, 20, 21 22 and 23 are almost contiguous to one another and form a group by themselves.(*vide* colour photo on cover). Cave 18 from this group has similar architectural features like those of cave 2 and 6 and in having octagonal pillars resting on the parapet,a verandah and a astylar hall inside provided with benches along the walls. However, the window opening flanking the entrance to the hall are absent in this cave and the pillars have a slight taper towards the top.This cave has a plain *lalata-bimba* and there is no cult image in this cave and it would appear that this cave was carved in about 4th cent. A.D. and was later occupied for Vajrayana worship and may have then contained an image of Aksobhya.

Cave No. 19 which was originally conceived as a Vajrayana shrine was abandoned, in the initial stages, with the fall of a large chunk of rock from the roof top. This huge rock is still lying in front of the entrance to the cave. This cave was thereafter taken charge of by followers of the brahmanical faith in the 12th centry A.D. when they carved out a hall supported by four pillars with *kichakas* on the underside of the brackets, *antarala* and a monolithic shrine and with a circumambulatory passage at a slightly higher level . This cave follows the typical architectural plan of the Yadava period temple and the pillar order is typical of that style. The ceiling is decorated with inverted lotus pendent and there are episodes from *Ramayana* and *Bhagavata* carved, in panels, on the ceiling. This cave although originally intended to be Vajrayana cave, was entirely excavated in the 12th century by followers of brahmanical (Saiva) faith. About the same time cave 20, a small excavation with distinctive pillars containing *ghatapallava* motif in its shaft came to be carved alongside cave 20. Inside the *garbha-griha* there is an *adhishthana* for a shiva *linga*.

Cave 21 has similar architectural features like those met with in cave 2, 6, 17 and 18. It has a *garba-griha* at the back of the hall but there is no cult image in it. However, in the verandah, on the eastern wall, is carved, in a niche, a very large image of Ganesha. It appears that this cave was excavated in about the 9th or 10th century by the Vajrayana followers but was later converted and used for worship of Ganesha.

Cave no. 22 again is a small excavation

with pillars of the Yadava period. In the *garbha-griha* there is a socket for insertion of the *linga* and in the back wall a niche has been carved to accommodate the figure of a *yogi* seated in *padmasana* and in *vyakhyana mudra*. It is likely that he is intended to represent a Natha *yogi*.

Cave 23 is a cave with distinct architectural features. It has distinct pillars, portraying typical Yadava period features in having square bases an octagonal *padma bandha* and a round shaft relieved by a band of lozenge and bead design, the *kalasa* with triangular fillet and capped by voluted bracket with *nagabandha*. This cave was meant to be a brahmanical cave but was not finished as would be seen from the irregular placement of the *garbha-griha* and the adjacent cell. This cave belongs about the 12th century A.D.

The remaining caves 24 to 28 which are separated by some distance from the group of caves 18 to 23, appear to belong to about 13th/14th century A.D. when brahmanical activity was put under great stress and strain by islamic incursions excepting the cave 27 which may be an early excavation of circa 10th cent. A.D.

Cave 29 which is a very important cave of the Natha *pantha* and is well separated from the main group being on the other side of the hill appears to belong to the 14th cent. A.D. (Plates 52–58). It may have begun, perhaps , earlier, in *circa* 13th century as a Saiva shrine. This cave which contains sculptured figures of 84 *Siddhas*, composite panel depicting Adinatha, Girija and Mastyendranatha as the main cult objects together with Lalita and Gorakhnath in the side walls is the latest excavation at the site. The sculptures of Ganesha,Lakshmi and Saraswati appearing in the forecourt may, however, belong to the 13th century when the excavation was begun as a saiva shrine. The sculptures of Anjaneya and Bhairava outside the cave on the rock face would however, belong to the 14th century and inevitably form part and parcel of the Natha cave complex.

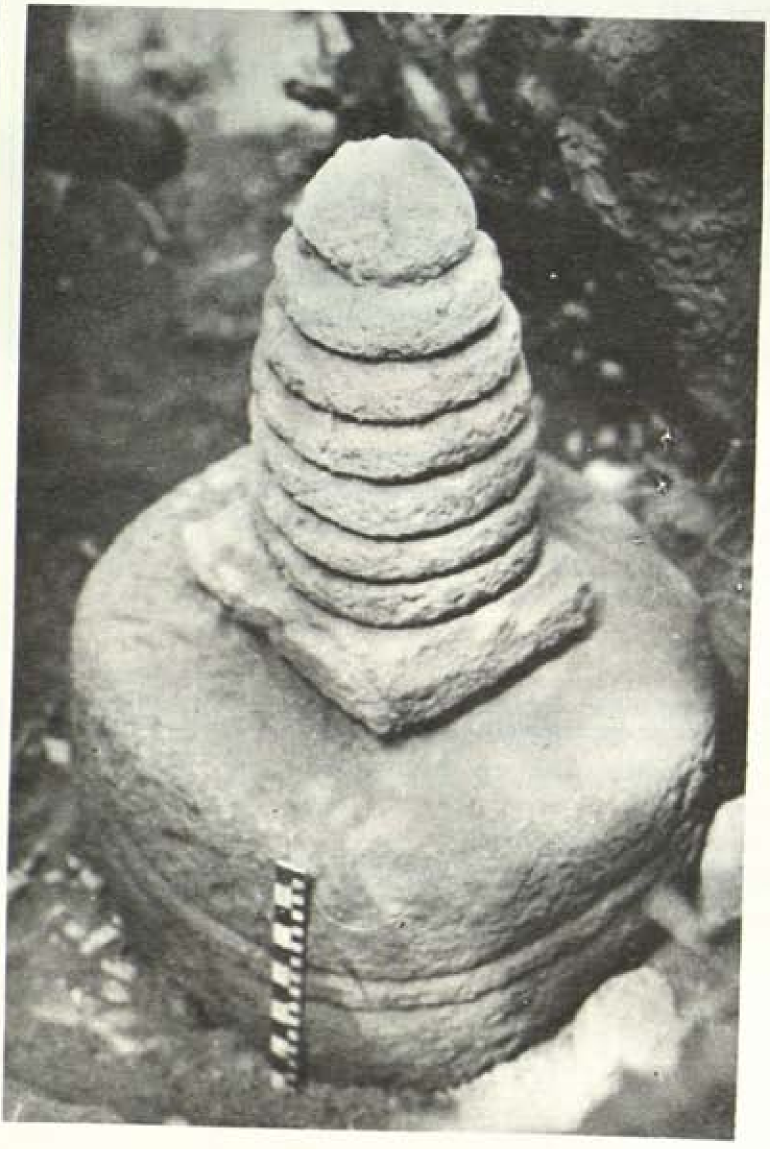
To sum up , it may be stated that this cave centre was begun in *circa* 3rd century A.D. during the late Hinayana period. Subsequently some caves were added in the 4th or 5th cent. A.D. but these do not possess distinct Mahayana features. However, major transformation of earlier caves came about in *circa* 10th cent. A.D. and the followers of Vajrayana faith were responsible for this.It was in the 12th cent.that creation of purely Saiva and Ganapatya caves was undertaken during Silahara or Yadava rule.This was followed in the 13th and 14th centuries by Natha occupation of the area, which appears to be the culmination, both in point of architectural activity and religious affiliation. So far as religious thought is concerned, Natha followers appear on the scene after the tantric Vajrayana occupation and their role was to purify the debased tantric rites and rituals by ethical ideology and yogic practices.

The table on the following page gives the possible chronology of Panhale caves:

CHART SHOWING THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PRANALAKA CAVES

Caves of circa third to fifth century A.D. begun by followers of the Hinayana form of Buddhism	*Caves appropriated by Vajrayana followers in circa 10th cent. A.D.*	*Brahmanical and Natha caves*
A	A	
Circa third century 4, 5, 6	4, 5, 6 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15 17 (?) 18, 21 and 27	(Brahmanical) *Circa* 12th Cent. A.D. 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 13th century A.D. 24, 25, and 28
B	B	B
Circa 4/5th century A.D. 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, (?) 17, 18, 27	Carved out by followers of Vajrayana in 10th cent A.D. 1, 3, 12, 13.	Natha caves of *Circa* 13 and 14 century A.D. 14, 21 and 29.

1. For the loose *stupas* from Kondivte and Kanheri please see Plate 2 and Fig. 2 respectively. At Pale, the author noticed two loose rock-cut *stupas*, partially buried and lying at the foot of the hill. Evidently these *stupas* which once adorned either the roof terrace or the forecourt of a cave have rolled down and are lying there.



Panhale
A *stupa* seen on the other side the river opposite the cave site.(Courtesy: Department of Archaeology Government of Maharashtra Bombay)

5

Loose Icons from Pranālaka

LOOSE ICONS FROM PRAṆĀLAKA

During the course of clearance operations undertaken by the Maharashtra State Department of Archaeology and Museums and later by the Archaeological Survey of India, a number of icons,some partially or wholly mutilated,were recovered. At one time, these may have been under worship in different caves or in the structural temples which came to be erected during the 13th and 14th cent. A.D. near the caves.

Among these icons, there are five of Aksobhya, the chief deity worshipped during the Vajrayana occupation of the cave group. As already mentioned there are two other sculptures of this deity, a broken torso in cave 6 and another mutilated one in cave 8. Besides this, there is one icon of Siddhaikavira which would also belong to the Vajrayana pantheon.

The next category of icons contains representations of Ganesh, Siva-Parvati, Siva (Trimurti), Bhairava, some female deities, *nandi* and a few highly mutilated figures which are not easily identifiable. Two icons depicting Kubera may also belong to the Vajrayana or brahmanical assemblage.

In the third category are icons pertain – ing to Natha *Sampradaya* .There is one headless figure of a standing Natha Siddha perhaps Goraksanatha, and a few images of Bhairava. The latter have been included in this category but they may belong either to Natha or Saiva tradition. Further such a rigid distinction is not possible as Natha *Sampradaya* was not outside the fold of brahmanism. The worship of Bhairava was popular both with the Saiva as well as Natha followers.

Among other miscelleneous icons there is a *viragal* (hero-stone) which, from its plastic style may belong to the Silahara-Yadava period. The custom of erecting *viragals* in the memory of illustrious warriors who lost their lives in the defence of their village, cattle or community gained importance during the rule of later Chalukyas and became wide-spread during Silaharas-Yadava period. In the Konkan area, there are innumerable such icons found near Silahara-Yadava period temples and habitations. The large sized sculptured *viragals* found at Eksar near Borivali (dist. Thana) contain scenes from a naval battle, which some Silahara King may have fought with some other royal power. At the Silahara temple sites such as Ambernath or Lonad (both near Kalyan) *viragals* are noticed. They were also noticed by the author at Chaul at the foot of the hill containing the Higlajmata cave group and also in almost all the villages on way to Thanala caves from Pali Sudhagad (dist. Rayagad). It is no wonder that Panhale contains relics of this class.

All icons worthy of note are described below, but only those which are important from iconographic or artistic point of view are illustrated:

1. Image of Aksobhya. This was found near Cave 4, has its head and hands missing. It is seated in *Vajraparyankasana* on

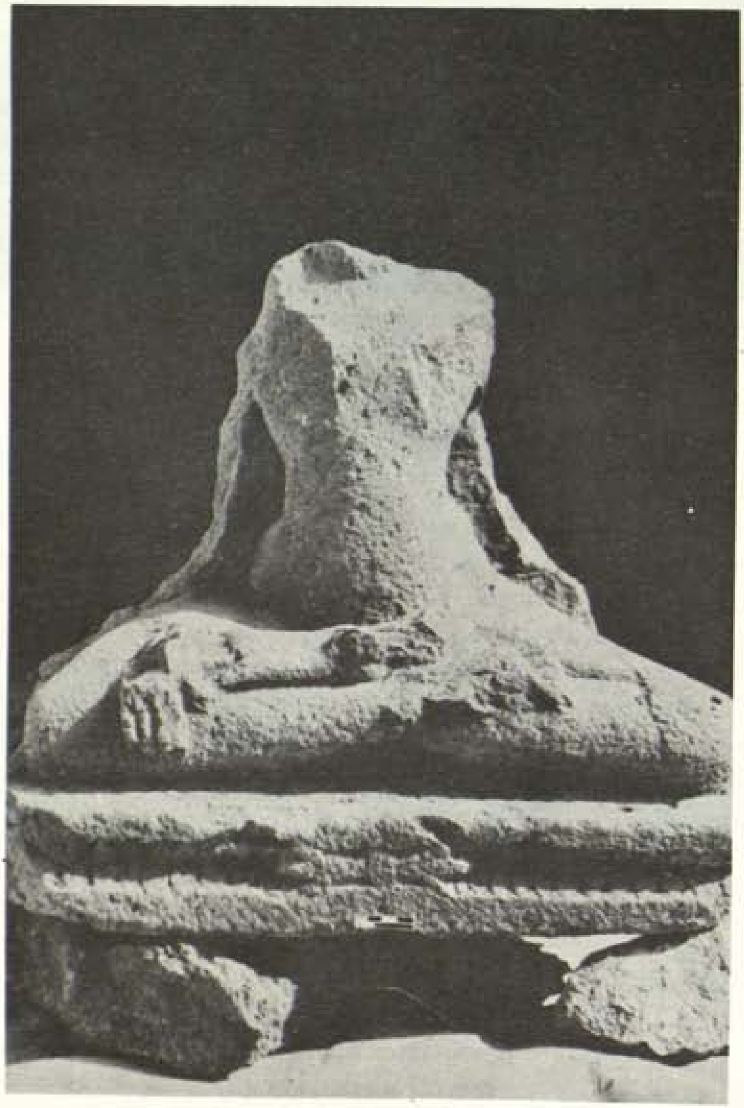


Plate 64. Panhale

Torso of the image of Aksobhya, found near cave 4. *(circa* 11th century A.D.).



Plate 65. Panhale
Aksobhya.(*circa*
11th century A.D.).

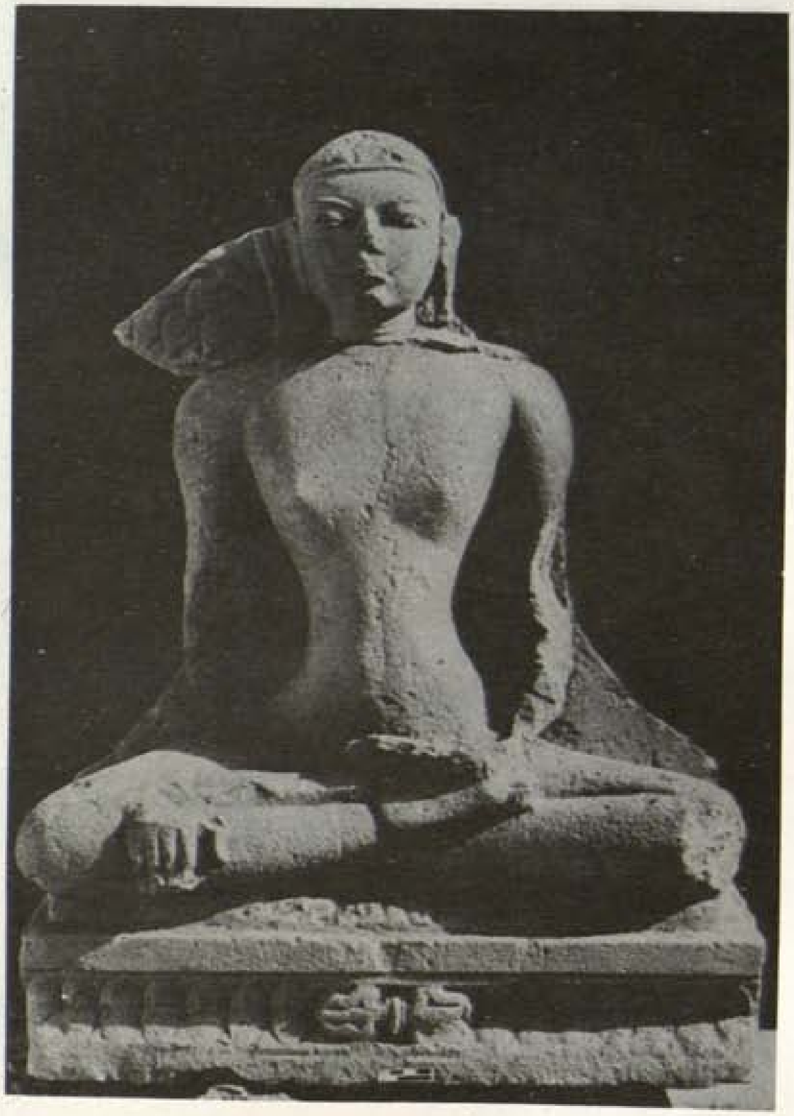


Plate 66. Panhale
Image of Aksobhya.
(*circa* 10th century A.D.).



Plate 67. Panhale
Head of Aksobhya
and some pieces of
prabhavali.(circa
10th century A.D.).



Plate 68. Panhale
Image of
Siddhaikavira. (*circa*
10th century A.D.).

a crudely cut double lotus seat with *vajra* placed horizontally in the centre. Of the right hand which is in *bhumisparsa-mudra*, only the palm placed on the knee is visible,drapery covering the left shoulder is indicated by two lines.Period: 11th century A.D.Width and height 45 cms(Pl. 64).

2. Image of Aksobhya seated in *Vajrapankasana*. His detached head recovered separately fits in with the torso. His hands below the elbow are missing but the palm placed on the knee in the attitude of *bhumisparsa-mudra* is partially intact. The image is well carved on a double lotus seat with the *vajra* placed horizontally in the centre. The garment is shown spread in a fan-like manner on the seat. A thin line on the chest indicates the upper garment covering the left shoulder. The hair is shown in small ringlet form but the tuft (*usnisa*) is missing. The ears have long lobes reaching up to the shoulders. There was a halo (*prabha*) around the head, of which a portion is seen to his left. There is a tenon below for fixing the image. The image assignable to 10th century A.D. is a fine piece where the artist has succeded in imparting expression of serenity on the face.
Width 48 cms. height 66 cms.(Plate65).

3. Image of Aksobhya seated in *vajraparyankasana*, on a double lotus seat with the *vajra* placed horizontally against the seat.His detached head fits well on the torso so as to complete the image. It has a tenon below indicating that it was enshrined in some cave. Both the hands below the elbow are missing but the palm of the right hand is damaged below the shoulder but the palm placed on soles of his feet is fairly intact. The head shows, on the right side, part of the halo *(prabha)* decorated with *pipal* tree leaves. His ear lobes are extended up to the shoulders, the *usnisa* however is missing .The drapery is indicated in the same way as in earlier images.
Width 52 cms. height 70 cms. (Pl. 66).

4. Head of Aksobhya (?) with *usnisa* and ear-lobes touching the shoulder. portion below the neck is missing.
Period : 10th century A.D.
Height 21 cms. (Pl. 67).

5. Three fragments of *prabhavali* of Aksobhya showing *pipal* tree motif in a creeper form.
Period : 10th century A.D.
Height 26 cms.

6. Roughly hewn head perhaps of Aksobhya with *usnisa*. He has long ear lobes but the face is damaged.
Period : 11th century A.D.
Height 12 cms.

7. Image of Siddhaikavira, broken below the waist. His broken head fits in with the torso. It has a *prabhavali* showing stylised flames disposed in a fan like manner. Above the *usnisa* is a seated figure of Aksobhya in *Vajraparyakasana* attitude with the right hand in *bhumisparsha-mudra*. On the *prabhavali*, to the right side, is carved a lotus and it appears that it was held by the



Plate 69. Panhale Ganesha.(*circa* 12th century A.D.).



Plate 70. Panhale
Siva - Trimurti.
(*circa* 12th century A.D.).



Plate 71. Panhale
Siva - Parvati with Ganesha and Kumara. (*circa* 12th century A.D.)

Plate 72. Panhale
Lower portion of Siva. Parvati image seated on *nandi* and *simha* respectively together with standing Ganesha and Kumara on either side. (*circa* 12th century A.D.).



Plate 73. Panhale, (Tejewadi)
Nandi, headless (*circa* 12th century A.D.).



god in the left hand. It is very likely that the icon represents Sidhaikavira who belongs to the *vajra* family of Aksobhya. He is supposed to carry a blue lotus in his left hand, while the right hand is in *varada mudra*.
Height 37 cms. (Pl. 68).

8. Ganesh, seated on a moulded *adhisthana*. In his upper right hand he holds a *parasu*, in the lower a broken tooth, in the upper left, *ankusa* and in the lower left a *modaka patra*. His mount, (mouse) is shown below his left leg. His belly is tied with a cobra, its hood is seen on the front part of the belly He wears a *karanda mukuta*.
Period: 12th century A.D.
Height 73 cms (Pl. 69).

9. Head of Siva with the three faces, the left is of *aghora* Siva, the central of *tatpurusha* and the right of *vamadeva*.
Period : 12th century A.D.
Height 32 cms. (Pl. 70).

10. Trimurti, a very crude and damaged image of *Trimurti Siva*.
Period : 15th century A.D.
Height 35 cms.

11. Siva-Parvati. Siva is seated over his bull mount in *savyalaltasana* with Parvati on his left lap. To their left is Kartikeya riding on a peacock and Ganesha is seated near Siva's right foot. The *ayudhas* of Siva are damaged but only the trident held in his right hand can be recognised.
Period : 12–13th century A.D.
Height 35 cms. (Pl. 71).

12. Siva Parvati on Nandi Siva and Parvati with Ganesh on the left side and Kumara on the right. The image was found from debris between caves 16 and 17.
Period: 10th century A.D.
Height 40 cms. (Pl. 72).

13. Nandi (bull),headless from Tejwadi
Period: 11th century A.D.
Height 45 cms. (Pl. 73).

14. Standing image of four armed Siva-Bhairava, upper right holding *damaru*, lower right a dagger, upper left *trisula* and lower right *naramunda*. He wears *runda-mala* and stands in *tribhanga*. A dancing attendant is shown on either side. Over the head is a *naga* conopy. Near his right foot is an object perhaps a bowl, for offerings. There are some figures near the right side perhaps an attendant and a dog. The image has a tenon at the bottom.
The image has a tenon at the bottom.
Period: 12th century A.D.
Height 64 cms. (Pl. 74).

15. Base portion of *prabhavali* of the image of Bhairava showing an emaciated female figure together with another one on his right side.
Period: 13th – 14th century A.D.
Height 21 cms.

16. Fragment of a Bhairava image, his canine teeth are visible. He wears round



Plate 74. Panhale
Bhairava. *(circa*
12th century A.D.).



Plate 75. Panhale
Kubera. *(circa* 12th century A.D.).



Plate 76. Panhale
Gorakshanatha.
(*circa* 13th
Century A.D.).

ear-rings and has a fanlike hair-dò behind the head.
Period: 13th – 14th century A.D.
Height 33 cms.

17. Fragment of the *prabhavali* perhaps of Bhairava image showing portion of its base (left side) and depicting a dancing figure broken above the chest.
Period: 13th century A.D.
Height 33 cms.

18. This mutilated image in four pieces depicts a standing *devi* in *samabhanga.* She holds in her upper right *ankusa,* lower right a shield, upper left a *khatvanga* and an indeterminate object in the lower left. She is flanked by a male attendant on the right and a female on the left. The icon is highly abraded.
Period: late 14th century A.D.
Height 53 cms.

19. A highly mutilated torso of a *devi.* It appears to be a multi-handed image but the hands are all broken.
Period: 11th century A.D.
Height 30 cms.

20. The left base of a *prabhavali* showing a dancing female probably attendant figure of Bhairava.
Period: c. 10 – 11th century A.D.
Height 27 cms.

21. Basal portion of a standing image probably of Kali standing with her left leg on a corpse together with an attendant to her right. The portion above the leg is missing. There is a tenon at the base for fixing the image on the *adhisthana.*
Period: 14th century A.D.
Height 32 cms.

22. Base of an image of Bhairava showing him standing on a human figure lying horizontally.
Period: c. 12th – 13th century A.D.
Height 10 cms.

23. Broken in three pieces,the icon represents Kubera. He is two armed with the left leg placed side ways. He wears conical *jatamukuta,* and has long ear lobes. A bag of money made out of the skin of a mongoose is held behind the head.
Period: c. 12th century A.D.
Height 50 cms. (Pl. 75).

24. Fragments broken above the chest probably of *yaksa* kubera. On his seat are carved full pots indicating treasures. He holds,in his left hand,the bag of wealth, adorned with mongoose head which is missing.
Period: c. 12th – 13th century A.D.
Height 22 cms.

25. Image of a Natha *yogi,* Goraksanath. He is shown striding along towards the left. On the *adhisthana,* there is a row of five cows proceeding to the right side. The icon is in three pieces and the head is missing. In the left hand he holds a *sringi* (a whistle made of deer horn), in the right hand which is broken from the below to the wrist, he appears to hold a musical instrument . He has a loin cloth tied by waist-bands perhaps made of woolen strings. He has two *haras* and a *yajnopavita.* He wears wooden sandles and anklets of *rudraksha.* He can be ide-

ntified as Goraksanatha on the strength of the row of cows shown on the pedestal and the outfit of a Natha *yogi*.
Height 63 cms. (Pl. 76).

26. Lower portion of a broken image which cannot be identified. It is in *samabhanga* with an attendent to its right.
Period: 14th century A.D.
Height 25 cms.

27. Fragment showing head and shoulders.
Period: 14th century A.D.
Height 13 cms.

28. Part of the base of a *dvarasakha* showing a male figure together with a broken part of another figure.
Period: 11th – 12th century A.D.
Height 41 cms.

29. A broken image of a deity standing on a double lotus seat. It has a tenon below for fixing it into the *adhisthana*. It has round anklets and flowing garment falling within the feet.
Period: 10th century A.D.
Height 36 cms.

30. A small fragment showing the damaged feets of some standing deity .
Height 17 cms.

31. Fragment of a figure in *padmasana* showing only the cross legged portion.
Period c. 15th century A.D.
Height 10 cms.

32. Torso of a male (neck to knee). It cannot be identified
Height 50 cms.

33. *Viragal*. Two panels depicting a fight The worship of Siva is shown in the upper panel.
Height 75 cms.

34. Stone case for storing a copper plate inscription from Devaranwadi.
Height 45 cms.

6

Spread of Tantric Vajrayana in Konkan and Iconography of Tantric Deities

SPREAD OF TANTRIC VAJRAYANA IN KONKAN AND ICONOGRAPHY OF TANTRIC DEITIES

Archaeologically the spread of Buddhism in Maharashtra can be traced to the days of Asoka and the find of fragments of the eighth and ninth Rock Edicts of the emperor at Sopara can be cited as an indisputable evidence therof. It is mentioned in the *Mahavamsa* that as a result of the decision taken at the third Buddhist council held at Pataliputra under Moggaliputta Tissa , two Buddhist missionaries, namely, Yavanadhammarakkhita and Mahadhammarakkhita were sent to northern Konkan (Aparanta) and Maharashtra respectively. This tradition finds partial corroboration in the inscription on relic-caskets found at Sanchi and Soneri where some other missionaries sent to other parts of India find mention. The next few centuries witnessed excavation of a magnificent series of rock-cut caves in the mountain fastnesses of Sahyadri and its ranges at a time when the Satavahana kings held sway over the Deccan with their capital at Pratishthana (Paithan, District Aurangabad). All the early caves of this period indicate that they were excavated primarily by followers of the Hinayana school of Buddhism . The early caves at Bhaja, Pitalkhora, Nasik, Kondane, Karla, Kondivte, Kanheri, Junnar, Aurangabad, Bedsa, Nadsur, Khadsamla, Mahad belong to this phase.

It was in the fourth Buddhist council convened during the reign of Kaniska, that Mahayana doctrine was authoritatively recognised, although Mahayanism had already made inroads in the orthodox doctrine much earlier. The Sravakayana preached by the Buddha did not throw open the gates of *nirvana* to the *sravakas*, who were allowed to teach but they could neither attain emancipation themselves or help others to attain it.. The new doctrine which termed the orthodox doctrine as Hinayana recognised the inherent capacity of everybody to attain Buddhahood by the acquisition of virtues (*paramita*), like *dana* (liberality), *sila* (morality), *kshanti* (forbearance), *virya* (energy), *prajna* (knowledge), *satya* (truthfulness) etc. This brought about qualitative decline but, at the same time, opened the flood gates of *nirvana* to one and all and Bodhisattva became an object of worship and reverence because he did not care for his own salvation but was keen to help fellow creatures to attain it. Buddha was deified and the element of *bhakti* permeated the doctrine so much so that Buddha and Bodhisattva images come to be set up in large number supplanting to an extent,the time honoured practice of indicating the presence of Buddha by symbols.

Mahayana soon swamped early Hinayana centres in Western India and Maharashtra and the old austere places of worship like the *Caityagrihas* and *viharas* came to be altered and embellished with images of Buddha and Bodhisattva, while new shrines also came to be added at old centres of Buddhist worship like Ajanta, Nasik, Kanheri, Aurangabad, Kondivte, Pale (Mahad) where this change is significantly palpable. New Mahayana mona-

steries came to be established at places like Ellora, Lonad, Ghatotkach etc. This new wave of refurbishing old Hinayana places of worship with Mahayana subjects manifested in yet another way and old caves came to be painted with figures of Buddha, and Bodhisattava and representations of Jataka tales. Even some of the oldest centres like Bhaja , Pitalkhora, Thanala, which do not have any Mahayana sculptures, came to be embellished with paintings of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The fading outlines of such paintings on the pillars of the *Caitya* cave at Bhaja and the recently discovered paintings at Thanala are two instances worthy of mention in addition to those at Pitalkhora.

It is against this background that we consider the advent of Vajrayana or the "admantine vehicle" in Maharashtra. In eastern India under the Palas (eight to twelfth century A.D.), the Chandras (tenth to eleventh A.D.), and the Bhaumas of Orissa (eighth to tenth century A.D.), Buddhism had taken a firm root in the soil. Buddhist university centres like the Nalanda, Vikramasila and Odantapuri Mahavihara (near Nalanda) had been established and eminent teachers from these universities went out to China, Tibet and Southern Asia to spread the message of the Buddha. It was during the rule of the Palas that Tantric Buddhism with a highly esoteric yogic system of dogmas, rites and beliefs in the efficacy of magic spells (*mantras*) and practices of *mudras* (physical postures), *mandalas* (mystical diagrams), *kriyas* (rites) developed and this rather extrinsic system changed the character of the Mahayana form of Buddhism with an elaborate pantheon and ritual of its own. It must, however, be remembered that tantric elements in Vajrayana did not make their appearance all of a sudden. Tantricism, according to Taranath, existed from very early times and was transmitted in a secret manner from the time of Asanga (beginning of fourth century A.D.). For about three centuries, according to Benoytosh Bhattacharya, this esoteric doctrine was handed down from teacher to the disciple and, in the process, the ranks of its adherents swelled enormously so that the secret doctrine no longer remained the preserve of the few but came to be practised and enunciated rather openly. Mahasiddhas like Saraha (or Sarahapada). Nagarjuna, Luipa Padmavajra, Indrabhuti etc., who were masters of Tantra boldly and publicly preached the doctrine. The Tantric work, *Guhyasamaja* has been taken to be the most ancient and authoritative work of the Tantric school and Asanga quite conceivably may have had something to do with it, as it is commonly believed that the tantras were introduced by Asanga after being initiated by Maitreya, the coming Buddha in the mysteries of tantra in the Tusita heaven.

Ellora in the heart of Maharashtra and Krishnagiri (Kanheri) in northern Konkan appear to be the two principal centres to receive, nurture and spread this new tantric doctrine in this part of the country. As already discussed in Chapter 2(pp.13-14)Panhale drew inspiration from Vajrayana centres like Krishnagiri and Ellora on the one hand and centres like Amaravati, in South-east India, but what is very significant is that when the principal centres became dormant and had ceased to exert any influence, Panhale continued to foster the tantric tradition in almost total isolation. It is further interesting to notice that this out of the way Vajrayana centre kept itself in touch with distant active centres in Orissa like Ratnagiri, as can be surmised

from the fact that the worship of Mahacandarosana, was practised in these two widely separated areas in the tenth century. A.D. This ferocious tantric deity of the Aksobhya family is worshipped in great secrecy and images of this deity have not so far been found in India at such an early date, except at these two places.

The worship of Aksobhya was also very popular at Panhale. His image appears in two cave shrines (cave 6 and 8) and there are at least five loose images recovered from the site (see chapter 7) and it appears that Aksobhya was a cult-object in five other caves. We do not have any other Buddhist cave centre in Konkan where this god is represented. It is however, very likely that the image of the so called Buddha in *bhumisparsa-mudra (circa* 10–12th cent. A.D.) appearing in cave 56 at Kanheri which, like the practice at Panhale, is carved in a niche with a rounded top and set within another of square profile,was of Aksobhya, although the *vajra* on the lotus seat is now missing. Perhaps, it once existed there either in rock or painted over the plaster coat on the figure. As already mentioned (chapter 2 p. 13), at Belgavi in Karnataka there is a representation of Aksobhya on a frieze where he is flanked by Tara and Avalokitesvara.

Among the loose images recovered from the site is a broken icon of Siddhaikavira (*vide* Pl. 68) who bears the image of Dhyani Buddha Aksobhya on his crown (*mauli*), thus showing his connection with Aksobhya who is the progenitor of the *vajra* family.

The depiction of standing manushi Buddhas, although a Mahayana subject on the rear wall of the hall of cave 2 in about the 10th century A.D. is another instance of the popularity of this subject in the Vajrayana pantheon at Panhale.

During the period Tantric Vajrayana held sway, monolithic *stupas* came to be installed on the tops of caves or in the forecourts. Panhale has such *stupas,* with a rather cylindrical profile, placed on top of caves or in the forecourt. There are also other such *stupas* in the proximity of other cave centres.This is also a characteristic feature at places like Bodhgaya (Bihar), Ratnagiri (Orissa) and Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh) where hundreds of monolithic *stupas* came to be installed in the precincts of religious establishments during Vajrayana occupation of the religious centres.

ICONOGRAPHY OF VAJRAYANA[1] DEITIES AKSOBHYA (PLATES 67 to 70)

As already mentioned five loose images of Aksobhya in various stages of preservation have been found in the clearance operation at the site and two more, one each in cave 6 and 8. While individual description of these is given in the chapter 5, we give here, in brief, iconographic features of this deity.

Buddhists of the Vajrayana faith have conceived of five *dhyani* Buddhas, each representing the five cosmic elements or Skandhas : *Rupa* (form), *Vedana* (sensation), *Samjna* (name), *Samskara* (confirmation) and *Vijnana* (consciousness). These *dhyani* Buddhas are said to originate from Vajradhara, also called Adi-Buddha, the primordial monotheistic god who is the embodiment of *sunya.*

The names, colours and symbols of the five Dhyani Buddhas briefly stated in *sadhanamala* are as follows:

Jino Vairocano khyāto Ratnasambhava eva ca

amitābhāmoghasiddhirakṣobhyaśca
prakīrtitaḥ
varṇā amisām sitaḥ pito rakto haritamecakau
bodhyāngi varado dhyanam mudrā
abhaya bhusprsau

The Jinas (victorious ones) are Vairoca na Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, Amoghasiddhi, and Aksobhya. Their colours are white, yellow, green, and blue and they exhibit the *bodhyangi* (teaching) *varada* (boon), *dhyana* (meditation), *abhaya* (protection) and *bhusparsa* (earth-touching) attitude of hands respectively.

Of these five *dhyani* Buddhas, Aksobhya is next in importance to Amitabha, by far is the most ancient among the *dhyani* Buddhas. The *pancakara* section of the *Advayavajra sangraha* gives the following description of the deity:

"Sūryamaṇḍalastha – nila – humkāraniṣpanno dvibhuja ekamukho
bhūsparśamudrādharo vajraparyaṅkī
vijñānaskandhasvabhā–
vaḥ vajrakulī —— śiśiramadhyāhnakaṭuśruti – ākāśasabda –
çavargo aksobhya – viśuddhaḥ".

Aksobhya originates from the syllable 'Hum' which is placed on the orb of the sun. He is two armed and one faced, exhibits the *bhusparsa* (earth-touching) *mudra* and sits in *vajraparyanka* (admantine) pose. He is the embodiment of *Vajra* family, represents the winter season, noon time, pungent taste, faculty of hearing, the element of ether and sound and the 'ca' (palatal) group of letters. His distinguishing mark is the *vajra* or the thunderbolt which is carved on his lotus seat. His *vahana* is pair of elephant.

Mamaki is the spiritual consort of Aksobhya and he is also shown in yab-yum with the consort.

MAHACANDAROSANA
(PLATE 22)

There is an entire *tantra* known as *Channdamaharoshana tantra* devoted to the ritual and worship of this deity. He is called as Acala, Acalacandarosana or mahacandarosana. A critical edition of this Tantra has been published by the Harvard University together with the translation of chapters I – VIII. Dr. Christopher S. George who is the author of the work mentions that according to formal Tibetan classification this Tantra is a *vyakhyanatantra* or "explanatory" *tantra,* belonging to the school of *Guhyasamaja* tantra which in turn is one of the five Mulatantras, or "Basic" tantras in the class of *"Anuttarayogatantras".*

He further adds that "It is important to note, however, that the CMT (Canda Maharosana Tantra) neither relies for authority upon any other particular work or school, nor is incomplete in the sense of requiring other specified works e.g. on *mandala* construction, initiation etc. After a study of this work, one has the feeling that the above Tiveatan classification, established several centuries after the composition of the CMT, may be rather artificial, and that the cult of Candamaharosana, although still much a part of Vajrayana movement, enjoyed a high degree of autonomy".

Discussing about the relationship of *Candamaharosana tantra* and its relationship with *Guhyasamaja* on the one hand and *Vajravidahrninama dharani* of candama-

harosana *Sadhana,* which is attributed to sabari, Dr. Christopher opines (p.3) that the cult of Candamaharosana may have existed as early as the 7th century A.D.

The discription of Candamaharoshana as given in the tantra is reproduced below:

"khadgograhakaram savye vāme
paśasamānvitam
tarjanyā tarjayantan ca damstrostham tu
nipīditam
Samprahārapādam savye caturmāravima-
rdanam
vāme bhumisthjānun ca kakārākṣam
bhayānakam
vasudhām tarjāyantan ca varajanvagratah
sthitam
aksobhyākrtamaulan tu nīlam ratnaki-
rītinam
paneāriràm kumāran ca Sarvālankārabhūv-
sitam
dvirastavarsakaran ca raktaçakṣurdvayam
vibhum
bhāvayet sthiracittena siddho ham
caṇḍarosanaḥ

In his right fist he holds a sword, and in his left he holds a noose. Threatening with the forefinger and pressing the lower lip with the teeth, he kicks with his right foot, crushing the four Demons.

With his left knee placed on the ground, squint-eyed, and with a dreadful face, he threatens the earth, with his left knee placed in front.

Having a blue crown adorned with Aksobhya, and a jewelled head ornament, he is a youth with five knots of hair, decorated with all ornaments.

He has the form of a sixteen-year-old, with two red, far-reaching eyes. He should meditate with resolute mind: "I am the Perfected One, Candamaharosana."

In the *Candamaharosana sadhana* published in the Gaekwad Oriental Series, No. 26 and edited by Benoygosh Bhattacharyya the following *dhyana sloka* appears (p. 169)

Avaninihitajānuḥ Savyahastaikakhadgaḥ
Taditarkaramuṣtau tarjanisaktapāśaḥ
Nividaghanaśarīracaṇḍaruk caṇḍacakṣuḥ
Śamayatu bhavavighnam vighnahantāca-
loyam

"Let Acala, who is the destroyer of all obstacles, and who has placed his knee on the ground and holds a sword in his right hand, a noose attached to the forefinger of his other (left) hand,whose body is compact and well set, of fierce countenance and eyes dispell all obstacles"

His *mantra* is *'Om candamaharosana hum phat'* and repetition thereof is said to ward of all sins and afford protection. The worship of Candarosana is performed in secret and the god is kept secluded from public gaze. Even if there be a bronze image, it is practically inaccessible to anyone except the initiated.

SIDDHAIKAVIRA
(PLATE 71)

There are four *sadhanas* in the Sadhanmala describing Siddhaikavira. The *dhyan* in the *Sadhanmala* describes his form in the following words:

"Siddhaikavīra bhagavān candramaṇḍa-
candropāśrarjah jagadudyotakāri
dvibhuja ekamukhaḥ suklaḥ vajraparya-
nkī divyālankārabhūṣitaḥ
pancavīrakasékharaḥ —— vāme nilotpa-

ladharaḥ daksine varadaḥ———
——— *tato bhagavato maulau Aksobhyam devatyaḥ pūjām kurvanti* —
— *Sadhanamala*, p. 140

"God Siddhaikavira sits on the orb of the moon, and illumines the world. He is two armed, one faced and of white colour. He sits in *Vajraparyanka* attitude and is decked in celestial ornaments. His head is decorated with the effigies of the five *dhyani* Buddhas He carries the *utpala* in the left hand and exhibits the *varada mudra* in the right. The goddesses pay homage to Aksobhya who is on the crown of the lord.

MANUSI BUDDHAS (PLATES 6 and 7)

Like the 24 Jain *Tirthankaras*, the Hinayanists recognised twenty four by-gone Buddhas, each having a peculiar *bodhi* tree. The Mahayanists also have several lists and thirty-two different names have been recovered. The last seven Tathagatas are designated by the Mahayanists as *manushi* or Mortal Buddhas. These are: Vipasyin, Sikhi, Visvabhu, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kasyapa, and Sakyasimha. They appear at Panhale along with other Vajrayana deities.

Manusi Buddhas are usually depicted as sitting cross-legged with the right hand disposed in *bhumisparsamudra* as in case of the large figures in cave 12 at Ellora. But they are some times represented as standing in which case they appear under distinguishing *bodhi* tree with distinguishing *mudra*.At Panhale the *manushi* Buddhas are shown standing but the figures are damaged and do not have the distinguishing *bodhi* tree .The Indian Museum image is No.B.G.83(Pl.7) is an image which can be compared to the Panhale frieze. At Kanheri, in cave 36 the *manushi* Buddhas together with Maitreya, the future Buddha are represented in painting on the ceiling of an earlier Hinayana cave.

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1. For the iconography of *Vajrayana* deties in this chapter the author has mainly relied on the classic work of Binyogosh Bhattachaiyya: *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, Calcutta pp. 47,48,113-14 & 154-5.

7

Natha *Sampradāya*: An Archaeological Approach

NATHA *SAMPRADĀYA*: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACH

In recent years, quite a good deal of new light has been thrown on the Natha *sampradaya*[1] but, very rarely archaeological sources have been utilised in understanding the reasons for the advent and authenticity of Natha-*Siddha* tradition. It is proposed to discuss some archaeological sources but before this is done, a brief outline of the Natha *Sampradaya*, its origin and expansion is proposed to be given here, in so far as it concerns us as a part of the regional study.

Natha *sampradaya* emerges on the horizon of Indian religious thought as a reaction against the tantric *sadhana* practised by Vajrayana Buddhist and Saiva, Sakta, Kapalika and followers of other tantric orders. The founder of the Natha *sampradaya*, is said to be Matsyendranatha. Very little is known about his parentage, and from the traditional mythological account it can be surmised that he belonged to the caste of fishermen and like most great religious teachers he is considered to be *ayonija* (not born out of womb). The historicity of Matsyendranatha is shrouded in mystery but that of his illustrious disciple Goraksanatha is beyond dispute. Scholars are fairly unanimous that Goraksanatha (also called Gorakhnath) may have lived in the early part of 11th century A.D. In so far as Maharashtra is concerned, Gahininath the disciple of Gorakhnath is said to have initiated Nivrittinath, the elder brother of Jnaneswar into the Natha order. Gahininath imparted the *mantra* of *'krishnama'* to Nivrithinath. This is very important because the Natha siddhas look upon Adinath (Siva) as the source of their faith. The departure is perhaps intended to bridge the widening cleavage between followers the two faiths, Saiva and Vaisnava and to inculcate that, what is important is self-realization and not the worship of this or that deity. Nivrittinath initiated Jnaneswar as his disciple. Jnanesvar who is also called Jnananatha was the celebrated *marathi* saint who wrote his famous work *Bhavartha-dipika* a commentary on the *Bhagwat gita* and the work is popularly known as *Jnanesvari*. With Jnanesvara, we see the rise of the *Varakari sampradaya* devoted to the worship of Vitthal the god of Pandharpur. Gorakhnath, the disciple of Matsyendranath, was a great organiser and by his strict adherence to the path of *sadhana* he spread the Natha yogic order in almost all parts of India. He is such a familiar saint in many parts of India, that he is claimed to have hailed from Punjab, Bengal and Maharashtra by the people of the respective provinces.

The Natha followers are primarily followers of Siva and their external appearance is like a Saiva *yogi*. *"Navanath-Navakam"*, (nine stanzas in praise of the Nathas) describe the outward appearance[1] of a Nath *yogi* as follows:

Saili-Sringi-mrigājina-dhvajapatta,
kaksaputi topikā
chatram pustaka-yogapatta-gutikā
ghantī patī pāvati
dibbī-danda-kamandalu laghu jatāh

śrikundale dindimāh
Sankha kharpara mekhalā japavarī
tumbī trisulam kalā
Kaupinam parasuvibhūti rachali rudrā-
ksamalā gale
kantha-kanikāna-pādukāh sājarana
bhasme-tripundam sasi
Kāsayāmbara kambalādi-vividho vyāgh-
rāmbaram vestanam
Srigorakṣaka vesa evah yatināmadesa
varagi mukhe.

Navanatha Bhaktisara, a marathi work by one Malu Narahari, son of Dhundi, (A.D. 1819) mentions, *kantha saili* (wollen string), *sringi* (horn whistle), *pungi* (blowing instrument), *sankha* (conch), *mekhala* (waist band) *nathpanthi yajnopavita* (sacred thread), *kundala* (ear ornament) *Japamala* (rosary), *danda* (staff), *yogapatta* (cloth thrown over back and knees during meditation), *mrigajina* (deer skin), *paduka* (wooden sandles), *vibhuti* (ash) *khapar* (potsherd) as the dress and accompanments of a *nath yogi*. In Maharashtra they also carry *trisula* and a pair of tongs.

The Natha *Sampradaya* is also known as Siddha or avadhuta *Sampradaya*.

The philosophy of Natha *Sampradaya* can be traced to sankhya philosophy and it seeks to establish complete identity between *pinda* and *brahmanda*. And this total identity can be intuitively experienced by a *yogi* in a state of *samadhi* after his *kundalini* is aroused and it reaches the highest *cakra* after passing through the six *cakras* Natha *yogis* believe in bodily postures *(hathayoga)* aimed at purifying the six *cakras* and practice *pranayama* (breath control), *dhyana* (meditation) to reach the state of *samadhi* and through *kundalini yoga* they worship Siva and Sakti in their inseparable form *(samarasya)*. According to them Sakti resides in Siva and likewise Siva in Sakti and they are inseparable like the moon and moonlight.

To the Natha *Siddhas*, all human beings are equal irrespective of their *varna* or *jati*. Thus we find names drawn from various low caste *jatis* among the eighty-four Natha Siddhas like, tantipa, halipa, dhobi, jaldhar, tongi, cunakar etc. The Nathas abstain from all types of intoxicants and do not practise the depraved path of *panca makaras*: partaking of flesh (*mamsa*), eating fish (*mastya*), practising bodily postures (*mudra*), drinking wine (*madira)*, and indulging in sexual practices (*maithuna*). On the contrary they lead a life of celibacy and simplicity refrains from *himsa*.

When Goraksanatha preached his doctrine, he must have attracted saner and thoughtful elements from among the Buddhist Vajrayana order and influenced some Vajrayani siddhas to give up their abnormal practices and follow his path. It is likely that, on this account, there is some similarity between the lists of the eightyfour Vajrayana *siddhas* (which became current from about 8th century A.D.) and that of the Natha siddhas. It is also plausible that some of the contemporary Nạtha siddhas may have adopted the names of the Vajrayana siddhas. Hajari Prasad Dwivedi gives the following list of 24 Natha siddhas who according to him were contemporaries of Gorakhsanath.

1. Chowranginath
2. Chamarinath
3. Tantipa
4. Daripa
5. Virupa
6. Kamari
7. Kankhal

8. Mekhal
9. Dhobi
10. Nagarjuna
11. Aciti
12. Campaka
13. Dhenthasa
14. Cunakara
15. Bhade
16. Kamari
17. Dharmapapatang
18. Bhadrapa
19. Sabara
20. Santi
21. Kumari
22. Siyari
23. Kamala-Kargari
24. Carpatinatha

Later, various *maths* of Natha *Sampradaya* spread over in different parts of India compiled their own list of Natha *siddhas*. Among such lists, a short list of nine Natha *siddhas* called *Navanathas* became current in Maharashtra.[2] It is as follows:

1. Gorakhanath
2. Jalandharnath
3. Charpatinath
4. Adabanganath
5. Kanifnath
6. Matsyendranath,
7. Chouranginath
8. Revananatha
9. Bharthaharinath.

In Maharashtra, there are many places which are traditionally associated with the Natha *sampradaya* in one way or the other. Among these Traybakesvar, 25 kms. from Nasik is the foremost, being the place where Nivrittinatha received initiation from Gahininath in a cave. In the district of Ahmednagar, there are places connected with Matsyendranath (Vriddhesvara), Goraksanatha (Dongarana) and Gahininath (chincholi near Amler). Ambejogai, in Bhir district is known as the place where Mukundaraja, a Natha *siddha* wrote his *Viveka Sindhu* and practised *yoga*. Paithan is celebrated as the place where Jnanadeva had repaired as a young boy and where, later on, saint Ekanath lived a life full of spirituality, spreading the message of *bhakti* by his exemplary life-style and writings. At Paithan, there is also the *matha* known Sivadinakesari *matha* which traces its origin to Matsyendranath through Goraksanatha, Gahininatha, Nivrittinatha, Jnananatha, Gaibinatha, Guptanatha, Udbodhanatha, Kesarinatha, Sivadinanatha and Narharinatha.

In the Vidharbha region of Maharashtra there are also many Natha centres.

Alandi near Pune where Jnanesvara took yogic *Samadhi*, is considered a very important centre for Natha and *Varakari sampradaya.*

In the district of Satara there are places like Triputi, Machidrargada, Renavi, Battis Shirala, which are also traditionally connected with Natha Siddhas.

Although all these places, some containing caves, others having *Samadhis* of Natha Saints exist, but no place has been studied archaeologically except perhaps, Harischandragad in district Ahmednagar where some inscriptions mentioning changa Vatesvara, a Natha *yogi* who was a senior contemporary of Jnanadeva is said to have lived and practised *yoga*. It is imperative that all these and many other centres are studied to find out relics connected with Natha association. It must be admitted that a good deal of old records contained in the *maths* have been studied by scholars but a comprehensive approach to the study of places hallowed by the memory of

Natha saints has not been undertaken except by a few scholars.

Among such efforts, is the study undertaken by Dr. U.P. Shah who brought-to light a Natha *sampradaya* centre at Dabhoi (old Darbhavati) in District Vadodara.He published his results in *Nagari Pracharini Sabha*[3] (sixty second year Vol. 2 & 3). He noticed on one of the four magnificent gateways of Dabhoi town (Mahudi or Champaner gates) thirteen images of Natha saints among which he identified as Matsyendranath, Jalandharnath, Padmavati, Gopichand, Gorakhnath, Kanifnath, Kanthadinatha, Mayanamati. Although he could not recognize Chouranginatha and called it Jalandharnatha, he did suggest the possibility of it representing the figure as Chouranginatha. This image is exactly like the one found at Panhale and is undoubtedly that of Chouringinatha. He has placed these sculptures to the latter half of the 13th century A.D. and this would conclusively prove that the Nath *siddhas* came to be worshipped during the thirteenth and fourteenth century, the evidence furnished by Panhale is thus very important. In the description of caves 14 and 29, appearing in Chapter 3 , identifications of some of the Natha *siddhas* has been attempted and there is some discussion about the philosophical background of the images like Lalita, Hanuman and Bhairava contained in that cave. It will be seen that the iconography connected with the Natha *sampradaya* requires to be studied in depth at centres like Srisaila which has a Vajrayana tradition like that of Panhale. Srisaila was known as Vajra-parvata and is mentioned as such in *Nikayasamgraha*, a Buddhist work of the medieval period. It is also celebrated to be a place associated with Siddha Nagarjuna and later became a place of such importance as to be visited by Chakradhar, the founder of Mahanubhava sect. It is very likely that this was the place where Matsyendranath was trapped in the domain of *kaula margis* and was 'freed' by his illustrious disciple Goraksanatha. This place would deserve to be studied in very great detail so as to shed more light on the Natha *Sampradaya*, its origin and of other contemporary religious sects.

In Tulu Nadu (North and South Kanara district of Karnataka) there was yet another centre where images of Matsyendranath seated on fish have been found. One such image is preserved in the Government Museum, Mangalore *(vide* pl. 302 B in Gururaj Bhatt's book *Studies in Tamil History and Culture)*. Kadri in district Mangalore was also a very important centre of Natha *Sampradaya* and deserves detailed investigation. The temple of Manjunath at that place contains reportedly some inscribed images of Natha *siddhas* and there is a *matha* where the Natha yogis actively practice their *sadhana*. The place is visited by Natha yogis during their peregrinations.

Since Panhale lies in the Konkan region and was a celebrated centre of Natha *sampradaya*, one is tempted to suggest that Konkananatha,a name appearing in the list of navanathas according to *Kadali Manjunatha Maha mya* of the Kadri *matha* may be a Nath yogi who popularised the order in this region. It is further interesting to notice that even in the seventeenth century, Nathism was practised in the Konkan region. P.K. Gode has cited an interesting reference (ABORI, Vol. 19, pp 49–60) from a Sanskrit *kavya* of the times of Sambhaji, the son of Sivaji (1630-1680 A.D.) that a person from Srinagarpur went to Radha country and practised *yoga* with a

teacher. Having mastered the *yoga* and become a *siddha*, he built a *mathi* at Sringarpur and spread the gospel of Natha *sampradaya* till the end of his life.

The cult of Parasurama and Dattatreya[4] are nearly contemporary with the rise of Natha *Sampradaya* and it will be useful to study places connected with these cults. In fact there is much in common between the *Avadhutas* of Dattatreya cult and the Nathas and both have freely borrowed from each other. The worship of *'Srividya'* whose representation in the form of Lalita Parameswari is carved in cave 29 of Panhale is a deity in whose worship Gorakhnath was initiated by Guru Dattatreya. In fact even Parasurama is said to have been initiated in the significance of the worship of Srividya by Guru Dattatreya.

Against this background the importance of Panhale caves as a centre of Natha *sampradaya* is supreme. This is further augmented by the fact that earlier caves at this place provide us with a back-drop of tantric Vajrayana practices which were current at the place in the form of worship of fierce deities like Mahacandarosana.

Footnotes

1. L. M. Joshi *Sri Navanatha Tatvajnana ani upasana* (Bombay) p.53 Also see another work in Marathi language, P.N. Joshi, *Natha Sampradaya*, *Udaya va Vistara*, Thane p. 110 - 118
2 P.N. joshi, *Natha Sampradaya*., *Udaya va Vikasa* , p. 307-8 The author takes a review of the disciples of Goraknatha and gives various traditions including the one current in Maharashtra.
3. The article is entitled : *Natha Siddhonki prachina silpamurtiy an* pp. 174-202. In plate I the right side panel (illustration 3) is that of Chouranginatha where the two severed hands are shown alongside the shoulder. Although the image has been stated to be that of Jalandharnatha, the author has put a question mark against the title. The figure of Gorakhnath has been identified by the presence of a cows to his right and left side (Illustration 4). The image of Matsyendranath can be identified with the help of the fish placed behind the neck.
4. Gopinatha Kaviraj, the article *Adhiguru Dattatreya aur Avadhutadarshana in Bharatiya Sanskrit aur Sadhana* pp. 191 - 209. discusses the relationship of the Cult of Dattatreya with Natha Sampradaya.



Mangalore
Stone-image of Matsyendranatha from Kadri exhibited in State Government Museum, Mangalore, (Courtesy - Directorate of Archaeology & Museums in Karnataka).

8

Religious Worship and Rituals Current among the People of Panhale

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND RITUALS CURRENT AMONG THE PEOPLE OF PANHALE

With a long tradition of varying religious worship and rituals at Panhale from 3rd century to 14th century A.D. it will be pertinent to enquire into the present day religious traditions and rituals current among the people of Konkan in general and Panhale in particular in order to trace continuity, if any, with the earlier traditions. For all the twelve Wadis in which Panhale is divided (see f. n. P. 4) . there is a common place of worship namely the temple of Zoali which is located on the top of the hill close to Durga-wadi to the south-east of the cave-group and not far away from the hill-fort called Panhale-durga. In this temple which was constructed in the recent past, the following deities are worshipped : Zolai, Antarala, Manaya, Waghjai, Navsari, Koteswari. Of these, Zolai, is called Pandhardevi and is considered to be the principal one. All these deities conform to the iconography of Mahishasuramardini except Nausiri who stands in *samabhanga* and has nine heads *(nava-sira)* four on either side of the principal one (Pl.78). It has two hands and holds in the right hand a sword and a shield in the other. All the images including that of Navsari belong to *circa* 18th century. What is, however, significant is that the image of Zoali is placed on a large old *adhishthana* (*vide* Pl. 77A & B) which can be dated to c. 10th cent. A.D. on the strength of the style of the figure sculpture it bears. On the face of the *adhisthana* in the centre is a *dharmacakra* or wheel of law with a deer on either side signifying that the main deity placed on it was of Buddha in *dharma-cakra-pravartana-mudra.* Further separated by a pillar on either side of *dharma-cakra,* there is a frontal view of an elephant and beyond it a lion with its one paw raised. This again signifies that the image placed on the pedestal was that of *Sakya Simha,* Buddha. Elsewhere (chapter 3) it has been suggested that this *adhisthana* may have been removed from cave 2 where originally it was probably placed in the *garbha-griha* with an image of Buddha over it. The *adhisthana* is 1.42 cm. long 61 cm. broad and 46 cm. in height and is irregular *panca-ratha* on plan. It has a 15 cm. square mortise in the centre which is 17 cm. deep. The image that was once placed on this pedestal has not been traced. There is also another image of Mahisasuramardini placed on an old *adhisthana* but it does bear any figure sculpture.

The main deity together with Navsiri and other deities are placed on a raised platform, the basal moulding of which are decorated with human figures, some shown in *padmasana* and some playing on musical instruments. There is a floral lozenge shaped decoration between square pilasters suggesting that the stones of the platform would belong to c.12 century A.D. (Pl. 79). It is likely that there was a structural temple on the top of the hill, which in course of time was destroyed and the present temple of Zolai came to be built near about the old site. It was also observed that the rock used for fashioning the *adhi-*

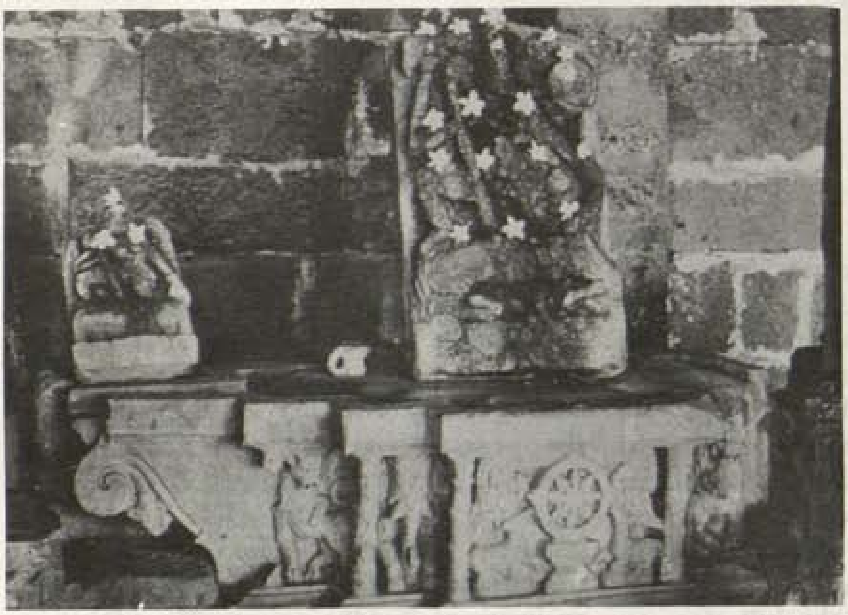


Plate 77A. Panhale
Zolai (Mahisasura-mardini) on an old pedestal meant for the image of Buddha.

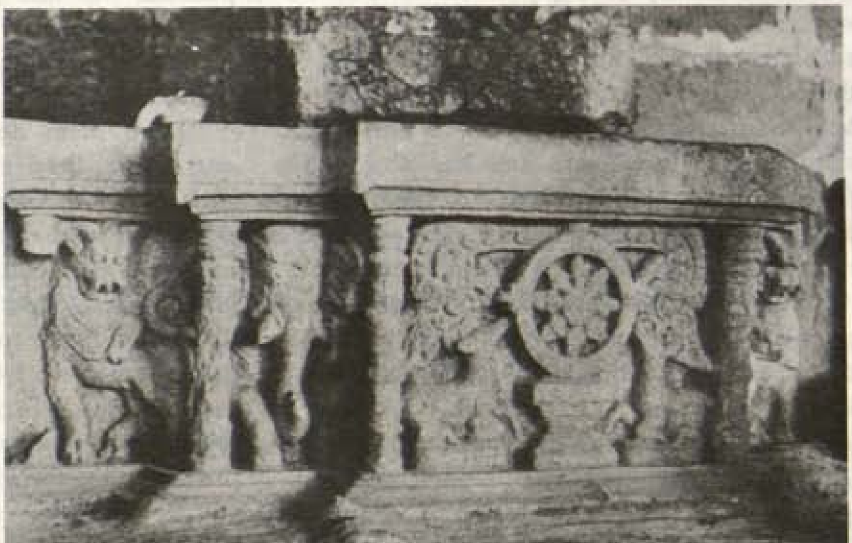


Plate 77B. Panhale
Details of the pedestal. (*circa* 10th century A.D.).

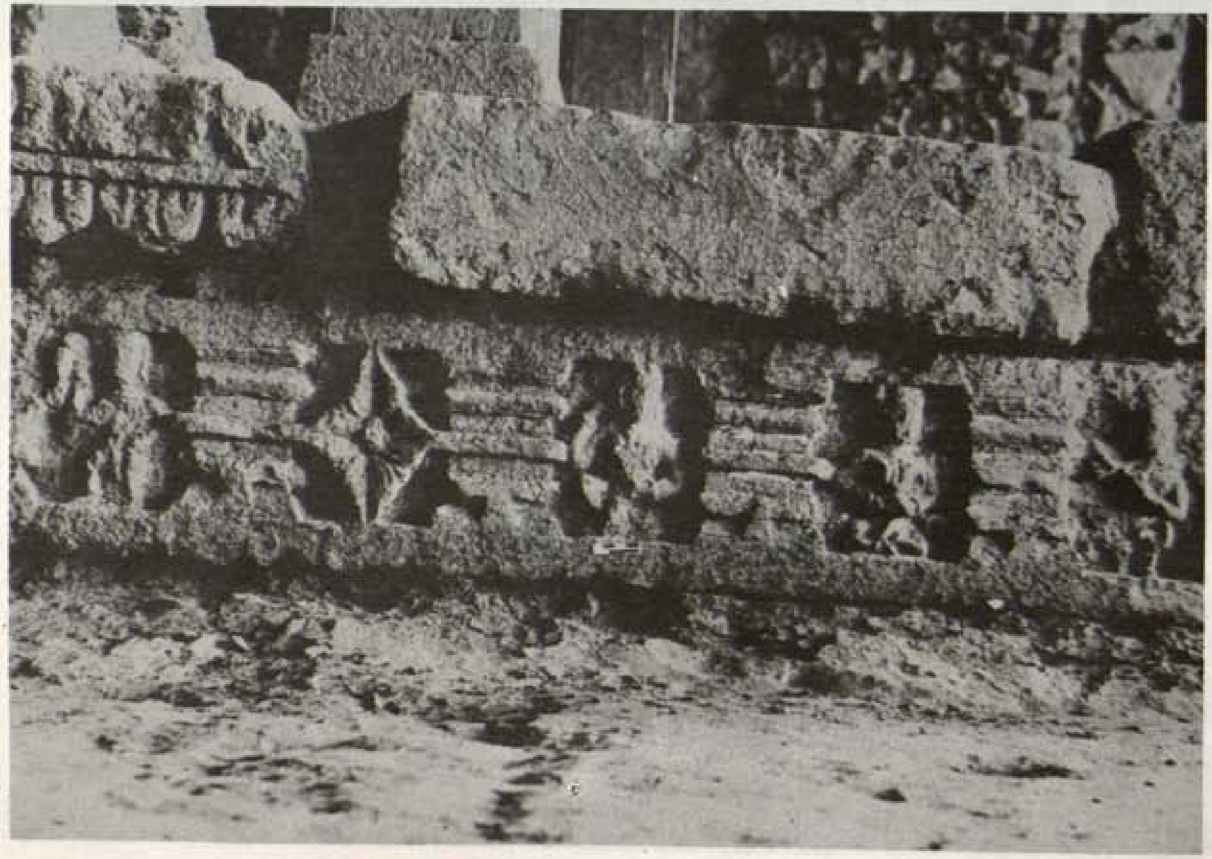
Plate 78. Panhale

Navsira, a village deity with nine heads together with other images.(*circa* 18th century A.D.).



Plate 79. Panhale

Sculptured basement reused in the modern temple of Zolai. (*circa* 12th century A.D.).



sthanas is not local and appears to have been brought from some distance, from a quarry where fine grained trap rock was available.

Pandhardevi[1] ,the other name of the Zolai recalls to our mind the other name of Tara, namely Pandara and it is quite likely that the old Buddhist tradition of the worship of Pandara which may have existed in this area still lingers in the subconscious of the people of this locality. We were also informed that the other centres of cult worship of *devis* (locally called *thane or sthana)* are Rasalgada Gavatale, Matvan, Deganv, Anjavel and Palgad. The other deity with nine heads reminds one of the multiheaded forms of the Buddhist deities like the Prasannatara having eight heads. In this connection, it may be pointed out that one of the Buddhist caves at Khed, which is a little detached from the main group, is now used as a place of worship *(thana)* for the village deity Kheduji. Evidently the name of the deity is derived from *khede (Khetaka)* and is the *grama devata* of the village. At Chaul, the Hinglajmata temple is located in the Buddhist cave-group. The temple of Ekvira is just outside the *caitya* cave at Karla. At Dabhol in a large underground cave, there is a shrine dedicated to Chandika. A family of Dasnami Giris looks after the worship. All these instances would suggest, that the Buddhist centres came to be established at places where there was some. earlier worship of the mother goddess and soon after Buddhism declined, the mother goddess made her appearance and her worship continued unabated till the modern times.

For the day to day worship of the temple of Zolai there is *Gurav* and there is another functionary called *'Gavathe'* whose job is to seek the verdict of the deity in respect of devotees suffering from illness or afflictions caused by *bhutas* and *pishachyas*[2]. He places a bud of a flower on both the sides of the pedestal and if the bud of the right side falls down,the afflicted person is pronounced to be curable and if the bud from the left side falls down, he has no hope. This ritual of placing the bud *(kali)* on the pedestal in known as *"Inti". 'Gavathe'.* is supposed to keep fast during the *navaratri* period prior to *Dasara* as also on the *Phalguna Poornima* day up to the night when *'Holi'* is lit up.

The offerings made to Zolai usually consist of coconut, but a cock or goat is occasionally sacrificed by the devotees. There is ceremonial worship of deities immediately after *caitra poornima* and in the month of *Jyestha* at the time of plantation of rice seedings when the *mriga nakshatra* rain is about to fall. A *jatra* (religious festival) is held on the *narali poornima* day and during *dasara* and *deepavali.* In the month of *Phalguna* and on the *poornima* day the deity is carried in procession in a palanquin to all the wadis.

On the *nag-panchami* day people worship the *nagas* carved on the rock near cave 17. The worship of Ganesha however, is prevalent and the image in cave 22 is worshipped by the people from very ancient times.

The area of Konkan is known as Parasurama *kshetra* but at Panhale there is no image of Parasurama or Renuka.

From the fluctuations of religious worship from Hinayana to Vajrayana and then to Saiva including Natha, the picture that emerges is not of continuity but of partial rejection of the earlier tradition and adoption of a new one. The Vajrayana Buddhist who took over the earlier late Hinayana caves, transformed the caves and installed cult images of their deities. It is significant that the *lalata-bimba*

in all the Vajrayana caves is plain and it appears to have been purposely left uncarved in order to protect their highly secretive and esoteric faith being made known to all and sundry. All the caves have provision for strong doors and in many cases these were provided with cross bars (*aragala*) to further protect entry of any casual visitor. Almost all the caves were plastered with lime-mortar, more than once, and seem to have been kept neat and tidy during the period they were in use.

While the Vajrayana followers were entrenched at Panhale, Saivism seems to have made its appearance on the scene with deities like Siva, Ganesha, Saraswati, Kali, Bhairava whose loose as well as fixed images have been found at Panhale, when caves 20 to 23 appear to have been carved during this period. It is not unlikely that the Saiva teachers also followed tantric ritual. In the wake of this change[4] followers of Natha *sampradaya* took over the religious centre and it appears the last vestiges of tantricism were destroyed. The removal of the cult image from cave 2 together with the *adhisthana* may have been done during this time. The followers of Natha *sampradaya* seem have taken over cave 13 and transformed it for the worship of Gorakhnath. In cave 23 was carved on the back wall a Natha *yogi*. Cave 29, however, was carved as a special cave with sculptures of Matsyendranath, Girija and Adinath as principal cult images and subjects like those of Gorakhnath, Lalita and the eighty four siddhas. This cave was called a *matha*, as the nearby locality still goes by the name of Mathwadi and the cave area by name Gaurlena evidently refering to the image of Lalita contained in it.

In this context, we find that the Natha *sampradaya* continued to have fascination to the residents of Konkan even after the 14th century A.D. Prof. P.K. Gode published (ABORI Vol. XIX pp. 49–60) a Sanskrit work of the days of *Sambhaji* (end of 17th century) which mentions that one Sivayogi from Sringarpur (a village in Ratnagiri Dist.) had gone to Radha (Bengal) and after staying there with a Natha teacher and himself becoming a *siddha*, he returned to Sringarpur and established a *mathi* of his own and lived there. This Nath tradition is still a living force in Konkan and at Pavas in Rathnagiri District, a very eminent Natha yogi, Swami Svarupanand had established his *ashram*. Although he passed away very recently, the place still attracts many followers of this Natha yogi.

The *Kadali Manjunatha Mahatmya* retains a list of Natha Siddhas as follows:

1. Minanatha,
2. Kanthadinatha,
3. Gorakhsanath,
4. Konkananatha,
5. Virupaksanatha,
6. Ananganatha,
7. Jalandaranatha,
8. Chowranginatha,
9. Arunachalanatha.

It is very likely that as mentioned earlier the name Konkananatha may represent a Natha *siddha* who flourished in the Konkan region.

1. It is mentioned a page 232 of the Ratnagiri *district Gazetter* (revised edition) that in many villages of the district, the goddess Pandhar is considered to be the *ganv-devi* or chief goddess of the village. The *pujari* is generally a Gurav or maratha kunbi. On every full moon day coconuts are offered and on occasions like sowing and reaping, goats and fowls are sacrificed to the deity.
2. "The belief that there exist *bhutas* (ghost or evil spirits) is found among many. Ghosts are of two kinds malignant and friendly. Malignant *bhutas* are of a ferocious appearance; the friendly ones possess bodies like the human beings but their feet are turned backwards". See *Ratnagiri District Gasetteer*, Revised edition. p. 234.